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# Election of a Lifetime

**What we could gain: The most gay-friendly president in history and the biggest victory yet for gay marriage**

Special section begins on Page 5

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ELECTION 2008


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(Photo courtesy Magnus Kroupa Entertainment)

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Photo by Chris Carlson/AP

**"If Bill Clinton was the first black president, Barack Obama, if elected, will be the first 'gay' president."**

*Matt Barber, director of cultural affairs for the arch-conservative Liberty Counsel, in column distributed last week. (ChronWatch-america.com, Oct. 24)*

# on the record
election edition

"No, I don't mean [Obama will] personally decorate the West Wing, open a bathhouse in the Rose Garden or take up with Barney Frank. I mean he'll be the most radically pro-homosexual, anti-family president in history. … The very San Francisco values that brought you the behaviorally driven homosexual AIDS epidemic, San Francisco's public Folsom Street orgy, and the preposterous and oxymoronic notion of 'gay marriage' are the same values embraced by both homosexual activists and Obama, the latest politico to make 'em light in their loafers."

*More from Matt Barber's "Obama's agenda is 'so gay'" column (ChronWatch-america.com, Oct. 24)*

"The Boy Scouts no longer exist as an organization. They chose to disband rather than be forced to obey the Supreme Court decision that they would have to hire homosexual scoutmasters and allow them to sleep in tents with young boys."

*Excerpt from "Letter from 2012 in Obama's America," circulated by Focus on the Family Action, listing what could happen after four years of Barack Obama as president. The group is the lobbying arm of Dr. James Dobson's conservative Focus on the Family. (CitizenLink.com, Oct. 22)*

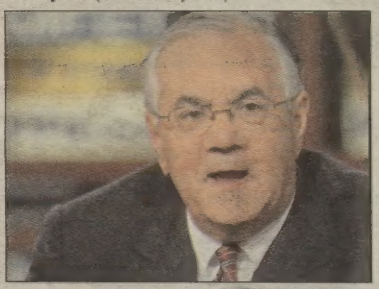
"Apple was among the first California companies to offer equal rights and benefits to our employees' same-sex partners, and we strongly believe that a person's fundamental rights — including the right to marry — should not be affected by their sexual orientation. Apple views this as a civil rights issue, rather than just a political issue, and is therefore speaking out publicly against Proposition 8."

*Apple Inc. in a statement announcing its $100,000 donation to the coalition fighting California's Proposition 8, which would make gay marriage illegal in the state again. (Apple.com, Oct. 24)*

"Were you to elect not to donate comparably, it would be a clear indication that you are in opposition to traditional marriage. … The names of any companies and organizations that choose not to donate in like manner to ProtectMarriage.com but have given to Equality California will be published."

*Fundraising letter sent from ProtectMarriage.com, a group working to pass Proposition 8 in California, to companies that have donated to efforts to defeat the measure. (Associated Press, Oct. 24)*

**Geoffrey Kors** (Photo courtesy EQCA)



**Barney Frank** (Photo by AP)

"It's truly an outrageous attempt to extort people."

*Equality California Executive Director **Geoffrey Kors**, responding to ProtectMarriage.com's letter threatening to out companies that gave money to the pro-gay group if they don't make equivalent donations to ProtectMarriage.com. (Associated Press, Oct. 24)*

"I believe having gay marriage diminishes the value of the institution of marriage. I believe it's a sacred pact between a man and a woman and it is so ordained by God. This isn't a civil rights issue. … This has to do with choice. ...I believe that it's obsessive compulsive behavior; it's been estimated that 80 percent of homosexuals were sexually abused as children. I think we should be helping these people."

*Republican candidate Earl Sholley, running to unseat gay U.S. Rep. **Barney Frank** (D-Mass.), during an Oct. 26 debate. (PolitickerMA.com, Oct. 27)*

**SOUTHERN VOICE**
1075 Zonolite Road, Suite 1-D
Atlanta, GA 30306
404-876-1819
(fax) 404-876-2709
editor@sovo.com
www.sovo.com

**PUBLISHER**
STEVE LONDON EXT. 24

**EDITORIAL**
Editor LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN EXT. 19
Features Editor MIKE FLEMING EXT. 30
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Contributors JIM FARMER, MATT FORKE, JOE PHILLIPS, SHER PRUITT
Illustrators ALISON BECHDEL, DAVID BRADY
Online Editor REBECCA ARMENDARIZ
Webmaster STEVE RYAN
Content Manager RYAN WATKINS
rwatkins@window-media.com
IT Manager QUINN MANSFIELD
qmansfield@window-media.com

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# John McCain vs. Barack Obama

Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama hold opposing views on many gay rights issues. This compilation of stances and quotes compares views the candidates have expressed this election cycle. Compiled by Joshua Lynsen. (Photos by AP)

## Supports same-sex marriage?

**McCAIN:** No, because "my own view is that marriage should be reserved for a man and a woman. That's what I supported in Arizona. I realize this is a controversial issue and we must conduct this debate in a way that respects the dignity of every person."

**OBAMA:** No, because "marriage has religious and social connotations, and I consider marriage to be between a man and a woman."

## Wants to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriage?

**McCAIN:** Not at this time. "I voted against the Federal Marriage Amendment in 2004 and 2006. I continue to oppose such an amendment today, because as I've explained this should be a state matter, and not one for the federal government — as long as no state is forced to adopt some other state's standard."

**OBAMA:** No. As president, he "would oppose any effort to stifle a state's ability to decide this question on its own. Whether it was a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage or a bill like the Defense of Marriage Act, I would oppose such efforts."

## Supports a repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act?

**McCAIN:** No. "As a Republican, I am a strong advocate for federalism. State should be able to decide as many issues as possible. That's certainly the case on the definition of marriage."

**OBAMA:** Yes, because "when it comes to federal rights, the over 1,100 rights that right now are not being given to same-sex couples, I think that's unacceptable, and as president of the United States, I'm going to fight hard to make sure that those rights are available."

## Supports civil unions?

**McCAIN:** No, but he does believe "that people ought to be able to enter into contracts, exchange powers of attorney, and other ways that people have relationships can enter into."

**OBAMA:** Yes. "I support the notion that all people — gay or straight — deserve the same rights and responsibilities to assist their loved ones in times of emergency, deserve equal health insurance and other employment benefits currently extended to traditional married couples, and deserves the same property rights as anyone else."

## Supports a repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law?

**McCAIN:** No, but is willing to review the law. "On 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' I'm going to defer to our military commanders. So far they have told me it's working. I'm wiling to have the policy reviewed to make sure that's the case, but at the end of the day, I'm going to rely on the commanders who will be impacted by a change in the law."

**OBAMA:** Yes. "I believe that we need to repeal the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy. The key test for military service should be patriotism, a sense of duty, and a willingness to serve."

# Experts, polls predict major Obama win

## Gay topics not seen as wedge issue as in 2004

By CHRIS JOHNSON

ELECTION 2008
PRESIDENT

Sen. **John McCain** won endorsement from the gay Log Cabin Republicans, while other national gay groups lined up solidly behind Sen. **Barack Obama**. (Photo by AP)

At press time Oct. 29, many political experts and polls were predicting that Democratic nominee Barack Obama would enjoy a convincing Election Day victory by taking a majority of the national vote and capturing important battleground states.

In the days remaining before Nov. 4, Obama was enjoying an average lead of about six or seven percentage points over Republican presidential nominee John McCain in national polls.

Obama also leads in battleground states that were seen as crucial for winning the election. In five polls published Monday for Virginia, Obama enjoyed an average lead of 7.8 points.

No Democratic presidential candidate has won Virginia since Lyndon Johnson took the state in 1964.

Polls also gave Obama a small lead in Florida and Ohio — which last went to a Democratic presidential candidate when President Bill Clinton ran for re-election in 1996. Obama also enjoyed a small lead in North Carolina, where no Democratic presidential candidate has won since Jimmy Carter in 1976.

Clyde Wilcox, a heterosexual Georgetown University professor and author of "The Politics of Gay Rights," said the 2008 election "looks like a good Democratic year" based on the polls and early voting trends.

"Obama is amazingly well organized, and he is really nailing big endorsements here at the end," Wilcox said.

Winnie Stachelberg, senior vice president for external affairs for the Center for American Progress Action Fund, said, "Obama is running strong" and "is poised to win a significant victory."

Stachelberg, a lesbian, predicted that Election Day would be "a mandate for progressive change" and provide a new direction in policy "that is absolutely essential for the country" and the gay community.

Hastings Wyman, editor of the Southern Political Report, said he expected Obama to take about 54 percent of the vote.

"If Obama is doing fairly well in the South, that means he should do even better in the rest of the country," Wyman said. "It's his most difficult region."

Wyman, who is gay, said if Obama takes southern states like Virginia and North Carolina, it would mean, "the day of the strong conservative message automatically carrying the day is over."

"Four to eight years ago, someone like Obama coming close to McCain in some of these states would have been unthinkable, so there's been a profound change," Wyman said.

### GAY ISSUES 'INVISIBLE'

As the presidential campaign came to a close, political observers noted that gay issues, especially the issue of same-sex marriage, did not emerge in this year's presidential election as a prominent wedge issue.

Wyman said gay issues this year have "been almost invisible" and both parties "have found it useful" to keep attention away from them.

"It's a potential Achilles' heel for the Democrats because gay issues can be very unpopular," he said. "The Republicans, on the other hand, have seen their strong conservative stand on gay issues and abortion and other social things eat away at their margins in the suburbs and among young people."

Neil Giuliano, president of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, said "to everyone's observation, there's been much less visibility" of anti-gay rhetoric in this election.

"We've seen the media scrutinize the anti-gay rhetoric from local and national campaigns more than ever, and that's probably why we don't see the large scale use of LGBT issues being used as scare tactics and as much of a wedge issue as we did in 2004," he said.

Brad Luna, a Human Rights Campaign spokesperson, said gay issues played "much less of a divisive role as they did in 2004."

Luna recalled how in 2004, while working in Oklahoma for Brad Carson's failed campaign for the U.S. Senate, political groups and the National Republican Senatorial Committee ran negative ads daily against his candidate on same-sex marriage.

But this year, anti-gay rhetoric on the whole was "not to the level we've seen in past presidential elections, and that's really a good thing for our community," Luna said.

He noted there were some exceptions. In North Carolina, the state Republican Party distributed mailings accusing Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Kay Hagan of wanting to pursue a "radical homosexual agenda."

McCain, however, rarely spoke about his opposition to same-sex marriage or his support for proposed state constitutional amendments banning gay nuptials in California, Florida and Arizona.

A notable exception to the campaign's silence on such issues occurred last week, when Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, McCain's running mate, told Christian media that she supported the Federal Marriage Amendment.

"I'm not going to be out there judging individuals, sitting in a seat of judgment, telling them what they can and can't do, should and should not," she said. "But I certainly can express my own opinion here and take actions that I believe would be best for traditional marriage and that's casting my votes and speaking up for traditional marriage."

McCain has opposed the amendment and voted against it in the U.S. Senate.

Obama, who also does not support same-sex marriage, also has rarely spoken out about the issue in his campaign. In his convention speech, he noted that "there are differences on same-sex marriage, but surely we can agree that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters deserve to visit the person they love in the hospital and to live lives free of discrimination."

While Obama does not support same-sex marriage, he has come out against proposed measures banning gay nuptials in California, Arizona and Florida.

On a recent appearance on the Ellen DeGeneres Show, Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.), Obama's running mate, said he "would vote against" the California measure if he lived in the state.

### ECONOMY TRUMPS SOCIAL CAUSES?

The limited attention this year is noticeably different from rhetoric in 2004, when President Bush endorsed a marriage amendment and made it a major component of his campaign.

John Kerry, the Democratic presidential nominee, often discussed same-sex marriage, but said he was against it. Although he did not support a federal marriage amendment, Kerry supported initiatives to ban gay nuptials in Massachusetts and Missouri.

Wilcox said candidates have not used gay issues to wedge the vote this year for several reasons, but primarily because of national concern about the economy.

"When the stock market sells off 40 percent, nothing else matters," he said.

He also said public opinion is trending in the liberal direction, especially among younger voters.

Luna said the marriage amendment's defeat in Congress in 2004 and 2006 also was a significant factor in the decision not to use gay issues to wedge voters this year.

"It was a piece of legislation that the religious right was all but sure they were going to get over 50 percent [on]," Luna said. "I think at that point, they really saw this as less of a polarizing issue than they had seen in the past."

Giuliano accounted for the campaign differences by noting the greater degree of visibility gays enjoy in the media compared to previous years.

"We've gotten to the point in our culture where our stories are in the media and our visibility has increased so much that society knows the truth," he said. "And the truth is that LGBT Americans are just like every other American."

Stachelberg said the McCain campaign and the Republican Party deserve some praise for not deploying gay issues to wedge voters this year.

"I think anytime we see a rejection of gay-bashing, divisive attacks on the LGBT community, we ought to take note of that," she said. "And that has clearly happened."

But Wyman was reluctant to give any praise to McCain's campaign for not stirring up conservatives with gay issues.

"I'm not of the school that attributes great moral motivations to political parties," he said. "I think politicians go after votes like businessmen go after profits."

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# Chambliss, Martin race down to the wire

## Runoff possible as U.S. Senate race tightens

By MATT SCHAFER
*mschafer@sovo.com*

Once trailing by nearly 40 points behind U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss, Midtown native Jim Martin had closed the gap to within the margin of error of most polls a week before the Nov. 4 election.

Martin, who championed gay causes during the 1980s and '90s in the Georgia House, went from a long shot after soundly defeating DeKalb CEO Vernon Jones in an Aug. 5 runoff to put him the position of credible challenger as Election Day draws close.

An Insider Advantage/ Poll Position poll of 637 likely voters on Oct. 27 put Chambliss at 46 percent and Martin at 44 percent. An Oct. 22 Rasmussen Reports poll of 500 voters on Oct. 22 had Chambliss with 47 percent of the vote and Martin with 45, compared to a similar Rasmussen poll on Sept. 16 showing Chambliss at 50 percent and Martin at 43.

The popularity of Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama and the growing disdain for President George W. Bush has likely caused Republican incumbent Chambliss' lead to narrow significantly.

Gay leaders credit Martin with derailing anti-gay legislation when he chaired the House Judiciary Committee. As commissioner of the state Department of Human Resources, Martin drew praise from HIV activists and gay organizations for his strong support for HIV funding and gay-inclusive hate crimes and civil rights bills.

Some pundits are predicting Georgia could be a swing state and may even vote for Obama, which would make it the first time the state has gone for a Democratic presidential nominee since Bill Clinton in 1992. But others say Georgia is likely to stay tied to its red roots and go with Sen. John McCain. But the race between Chambliss and Martin may put the state in the middle of a perfect storm for Democrats anyway.

"I think in the end McCain will probably carry Georgia — narrowly — but it may well be that the Senate race goes into a runoff," said Merle Black, a professor of politics and government at Emory University who is considered an expert on politics in the South.

If Libertarian Party nominee Allen Buckley, who recently deemed both his challengers Democrats, were to take 2 to 5 percent of the vote, it could drop Chambliss or Martin below 50 percent. If that were to happen, all eyes would be on Georgia, especially if a Martin win could give Democrats the 60-seat filibuster proof majority they want in the Senate.

"If that happens, then the national parties would put a lot of money into Georgia to try gain that last Senate seat," Black said. "I would expect that we would see whoever the president-elect is, as well as high ranking members of the other party."

Attempts to schedule interviews with Martin and Chambliss for this article were unsuccessful. Chambliss scored 0 out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign' congressional score card on gay issues in 2004 and 2006. In 2008, with his support of the Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, he earned a score of 20 from the HRC.

Even with the failing economy being the main focus for a new administration, Martin campaign spokesperson Kate Hansen said Martin would not forget his commitment to social issues.

"As a United States senator, Jim's first priority will be to reverse the failed economic policies of the Bush administration and get the economy back on track," she wrote in a email. "Jim will not lose sight, however, of the principles has held throughout his 35 years in public service and will continue the fight against discrimination in our society."

Sen. Saxby Chambliss

Jim Martin

| Federal Marriage Amendment (would amend the U.S. Constitution to ban gay marriage) | |
|---|---|
| For | Against |
| **Early Treatment for HIV Act** | |
| Against | For |
| **Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief** | |
| For | For |
| **Matthew Shepard Act** (would add sexual orientation and gender identity to federal hate crimes laws) | |
| Against | For |
| **Uniting American Families Act** (would allow U.S. citizens to sponsor same-sex partners for immigration) | |
| Against | For |
| **Tax Equality Domestic Partnership medical coverage** | |
| Against | For |

*Sources: Jim Martin's responses are based upon a June interview and responses from his campaign. Chambliss did not respond to repeated requests for an interview; his responses are based on the Human Rights Campaign Congressional Scorecard.*

## U.S. House races

Many of Georgia's contested races for seats in Congress feature incumbents with extremely low grades on the Human Rights Campaign's congressional scorecard, which focuses on gay and HIV issues.

- **Congressional District 1:** Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Savannah) has occupied the First District seat for 15 years; he has earned scores of 0 out of 100 from HRC for the last three terms. He faces challenger Bill Gillespie.
- **Congressional District 2:** Rep. Sanford Bishop's (D-Albany) scores from the HRC have fluctuated; his voting record for 2008 earned him a 70 from the HRC, ranking behind unopposed Reps. John Lewis (D-Atlanta) and Henry "Hank" Johnson (D-Atlanta).

Bishop's opponent, Lee Ferrell, writes on his website that while he believes marriage is a state rights issue, "[I]f it becomes necessary for the federal government to intervene, I support the definition of marriage as the union between one man and one woman."

- **Congressional District 3:** Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (R-Sharpsburg), who has earned scores of 0 on gay and HIV issues from HRC since coming to office in 2004, faces Democratic challenger Stephen Camp.
- **Congressional District 6:** Rep. Tom Price (R-Roswell) has received a 10 and a 0 from the HRC since coming to Congress in 2004. He is defending a district that includes largely Republicans swaths of East Cobb County and Roswell from Air Force veteran and CEO Bill Jones.
- **Congressional District 7:** Fair Tax promoter Rep. John Linder (R- Duluth) had received nothing but 0 scores from the HRC for his past three terms. He is trying to ward off a challenge from Doug Heckman.
- **Congressional District 8:** Polls show this to be one of the closest Congressional races in Georgia. Rep. Jim Marshall (D-Macon) has scored a 15, 25, and 11 from the HRC for each of his last three terms. His challenger, Rick Goddard, told the Tifton Gazette that the U.S. Constitution sets forth "the basic morals of marriage being between a man and a woman."
- **Congressional District 9:** Having scored a 0 from the HRC for three terms running, Rep. Nathan Deal (R-Gainesville) is defending the seat he has held since 1992 from teacher Jeff Scott of Chickamauga.
- **Congressional District 10:** Rep. Paul Broun (R-Athens) introduced the Federal Marriage Amendment this year during his freshman term and scored 0 on the HRC report card. He is defending his largely Republican district from self-proclaimed conservative Democrat Bobby Saxon.
- **Congressional District 11:** Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-Marietta), who routinely scores 0 from the HRC, is expected to cruise to reelection over Democrat Hugh "Bud" Gammon of Rome.
- **Congressional District 12:** Incumbent Rep. John Barrow (D-Savannah) is fighting to hold on to his seat against John Stone. Barrow has a mixed history on gay issues, supporting the Defense of Marriage Act while also supporting expanding hate crimes legislation. He has scored 25 from the HRC during both of his terms in Congress.

Stone has never held public office, but has been a talk show radio host and worked for two Republican Congressmen. On his website he states he would, "support a Constitutional Amendment and any other federal legislation necessary to preserve marriage as only between a man and woman."

- **Congressional District 13:** Members of the Congressional Black Caucus are rallying around Rep. David Scott (D-Atlanta). Scott, whose district is considered strongly Democratic, has been under increasing attack from challenger Republican Deborah Honeycutt.

Honeycutt has accused Scott of being corrupt, and referred to him as part of the Bush administration.

Although Scott has supported the Defense of Marriage Act in the past, he works with the HRC on a number of issues. His rating on the HRC scorecard has fluctuated since he took office; he earned a 55 in 2004, a 38 in 2006; and a 55 this year.

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# Gay candidate, allies seek General Assembly seats

## Activists hope to turn out gay vote across Ga.

By MATT SCHAFER
*mschafer@sovo.com*

ELECTION 2008
STATE LEGISLATURE & COURTS

Twenty years after he ran his first campaign, Tim Riley believes he has a chance to unseat state Sen. Ralph Hudgens (R-Hull) and become the first openly gay man elected to the Georgia Senate.

In 1988 Riley knew he was running a losing race. As a Democrat challenging one-term state senator and future U.S. Sen. Paul Coverdell, Riley said he was taking one for the team.

"Back in '88 I knew I didn't really have a shot," Riley said. "I was standing up for everybody who needed that voice, there is another opinion, there is another side, and we need to be heard as well."

According to his own polling, Riley says he is competitive with Hudgens in areas including Barrow and parts of Clarke counties, and is hoping that a last week push can find him the 4,500 to 7,000 he believes will carry him to a win. Unlike 1988, no one in 2008 has made a campaign issue out of his relationship with another man.

"I've been kind of surprised by it," Riley said. "To think that it was an issue 20 years ago in a metro district, and now in a rural seat it's not."

Although Senate District 47 is traditionally a Republican district, Riley hopes to win and hold the Athens area seat by focusing on issues important to his constituents like hunting licenses and education. While gay issues are important to him, he hasn't made it a part of his campaign and will focus on other areas.

"I think I'll just follow [state Rep.] Karla Drenner's pattern, that it's business as usual," Riley said, referring to the first, and only, openly gay person to win a state-level office in Georgia. "It doesn't define who I am, it is a component of who I am."

While Riley is optimistic about his chances of winning, the Athens Banner-Herald recently endorsed incumbent Hudgens, saying Riley has no detailed plans for what he hopes to accomplish.

Once a Democratic stronghold, Athens has been split into two largely Republican districts and Democrats hope they can pick up a neighboring district as well. Sherry Jackson, an attorney and pastor's wife, is trying to unseat Sen. Bill Cowsert (R-Athens).

Cowsert chaired a study committee on creating a hate crimes law in Georgia this summer, but Jackson blames Cowsert for not bringing the bill out of the community.

Jackson supports an inclusive hate crimes bill and would like to see civil unions in Georgia.

"I wouldn't go as far as gay marriage," she said. "I think civil unions are fine."

### OTHER STATE LEGISLATIVE RACES

Among the other Georgia General Assembly races gay politicos will be watching on Election Day:

• **House District 34:** Atlanta Stonewall Democrats officials said Earl Giddins sought out the gay group's endorsement early in his attempt to defeat Rep. Rich Golick (R-Smyrna). Golick is a floor leader for Gov. Sonny Perdue and voted for the 2004 state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

• **House District 35:** Teacher Jason Adams hopes to unseat Rep. Ed Setzler (R-Acworth). Adams is endorsed by Stonewall Democrats

• **House District 38:** Former state Rep. Pat Dooley is trying to regain her seat from state Rep. Steve "Thunder" Tumlin (R-Marietta). Although she did not seek endorsements from any gay groups, Dooley opposed the 2004 constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

• **House District 39:** Georgia Equality endorsed Rep. Alisha Thomas Morgan (D-Austell) who endeared herself to many gay voters for an impassioned speech on the House floor against the 2004 constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. She is facing Republican businessman Chris Cooper.

• **House District 45:** Air Force veteran RuthE Levy, endorsed by Georgia Equality, is challenging Rep. Matt Dollar (R-Marietta) in a highly Republican district in East Cobb County. Dollar supported the 2004 constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.

• **House District 80:** Although Michelle Conlon is running as an Independent, her campaign has received donations from House Democrats. Rep. Mike Jacobs (R-Atlanta) has received the support of both the Log Cabin Republicans and Georgia Equality in his first campaign as a Republican after switching parties in 2007. Georgia Equality and the Atlanta Stonewall Democrats both endorsed Jacobs in 2006. In an interview with Southern Voice during his first run for office in 2004, Jacobs said he supported gay-inclusive anti-discrimination and hate crimes legislation, and opposed any attempt to implement a gay adoption ban.

• **House District 81:** The race between Rep. Jill Chambers (R-Atlanta) and Democrat Chris Hutton has taken a nasty turn as both campaigns have accused the other of various ethical violations. Both Log Cabin and Georgia Equality endorse Chambers, considered a "bit of a maverick," by the state Republican chairperson.

### 'COME OUT AND VOTE'

Georgia Equality Executive Director Jeff Graham and his organization have been pushing gay voters and their allies to get to the polls.

"We started the 'get out the vote' effort a couple of weeks ago by sending out information to the people that we registered," he said.

Georgia Equality registered approximately 300 voters at events like Atlanta Pride and Black Gay Pride.

As part of Georgia Equality's "Come Out and Vote" campaign, the organization has been working to energize and educate its list of supporters through targeted mailing, and asking for volunteers to call voters in key races.

"We are really just encouraging people to be knowledgeable voters when they go in to vote," Graham said. "While people are tremendously excited about the presidential race, we have a U.S. senate race that is tremendously important to the GLBT community, as well as a number of local races."

Sen. Barack Obama's presidential campaign is also working to get out the gay vote in Georgia. Edmund Thornton serves as the Obama GLBT co-coordinator for the state and said he has helped to register hundreds of gay voters at events around Georgia. There are approximately 400 gay volunteers from Georgia helping with Obama's campaign, he said.

"I would say the LGBT community has been significant in the overall outreach and voter registration in Georgia. Outside of our women's constituent program we have been the most active base in the state," Thornton said.

**Tim Riley**, who is gay, is running to unseat Republican incumbent state Sen. Ralph Hudgens. (Photo by Matt Schafer)

### Georgia Equality endorsements

### State legislature

**Incumbents**

**Senate**
District 42: Sen. David Adelman (D-Atlanta)

**House**
District 39: Rep. Alisha Morgan (D-Austell)
District 44: Rep. Sheila Jones (D-Atlanta)
District 80: Rep. Mike Jacobs (R-Atlanta) +
District 81: Rep. Jill Chambers (R-Atlanta) +
District 85: Rep. Stephanie Stuckey Benfield (D-Atlanta) *
District 96: Rep. Pedro "Pete" Marin (D-Decatur) *
District 132: Rep. Calvin Smyre (D-Columbus)

**Challengers**

**Senate**
District 7: Tim Riley (D-Athens) *

**House**
District 35: Jason Adams (D-Kennesaw) *
District 45: RuthE Levy (D-Marietta) *

* Endorsed by Atlanta Stonewall Democrats
\+ Endorsed by Georgia Log Cabin Republicans

### Judicial races

**Cobb Superior Court**
(seat currently held by Tain Kell): Joan Davis
**DeKalb Superior Court** (open seat): Tangela Barrie
**DeKalb Superior Court**
(seat currently held by Linda Hunter): Linda Hunter
**Fulton State Court**
(seat currently held by Susan Edlein): Susan Edlein
**Fulton Superior Court**
(currently held by Jackson Bedford): Jackson Bedford
**Fulton Superior Court** (open seat): Karlise Grier
**Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court**
(seat currently held by John Lee Parrott): Jack Nebl
**Court of Appeals** (open seat): Sara Doyle

### Additional endorsements by Atlanta Stonewall Democrats

**State House**
District 2: Sadie Morgan (D-Rossville)
District 34: Earl Giddins (D-Smyrna)
District 103: Allan Burns (D-Lilburn)

## Judicial races could impact gay families

By MATT SCHAFER
*mschafer@sovo.com*

One of the races Georgia Equality has been working to impact is the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court. The organization has called 8,000 voters in the district and held an event for challenger Jack Nebl. Nebl is trying to remove Superior Court Judge John Lee Parrott from the bench.

In 2007, Parrott refused to allow Elizabeth Hadaway to adopt the young girl she had been raising — at the request of the girl's mother — when he learned that Hadaway is a lesbian.

Parrott ordered Hadaway to return the child to her birth mother, who insisted that the girl remain with Hadaway. Parrott then ordered the child into foster care and charged Hadaway with contempt of court. After months of court battles, Emma was returned to Hadaway.

### Other Superior Court races of note:

**Cobb County Circuit**

• Judge Tain Kell is working to retain the seat he was appointed to by Gov. Sonny Perdue in 2007. Georgia Equality has endorsed Kell's opponent, Joan P. Davis, who is running for judge for the third time in four years.

**DeKalb County Circuit**

• Georgia Equality has endorsed Tangela Barrie, who is running for an open bench against administrative law Judge Johnny Mason and recorders court Judge R. Joy Walker.

• Georgia Equality has also endorsed incumbent Judge Linda Hunter, who was the first judge in DeKalb County to grant an adoption to a same-sex couple. "Instead of my own self gratification look at my record. It's one thing to have a plan it's another to walk the walk and talk the talk," she said.

Her opponent, attorney Tom Stubbs, said he has a record of supporting gay families. He cited published articles in legal journals supporting gay issues and has called the state's 2004 constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, "The high water mark for ignorance in this state."

**Atlanta Circuit**

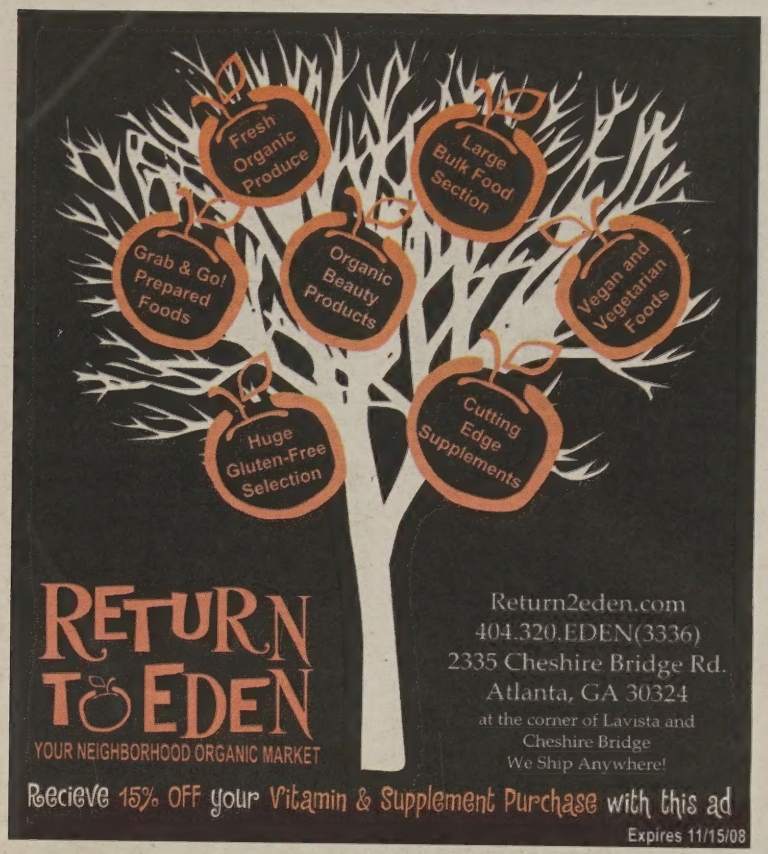
• Georgia Equality has endorsed Judge Jackson Bedford who is trying to hold on to his seat against Magistrate Judge Keisha Bottoms. Bottoms has been endorsed by Urban Independents, an organization that consults with Georgia Equality, Atlanta Stonewall Democrats and Log Cabin Republicans.

• Eight attorneys are competing for an open judgeship in Atlanta. Urban Independents picked Karlise Yvette Grier as the best candidate.

### Georgia Court of Appeals

• An open seat has brought seven candidates seeking a seat on one of Georgia's highest court. Perry J. McGuire received backing from conservative Christian organizations in 2006 when he ran for Attorney General. State Sen. Michael Meyer von Bremen (D-Albany) supported the 2004 constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

Georgia Equality and Urban Independents both endorsed Sara Doyle. Mike Sheffield has the support of the Georgia Christian Alliance. Christopher McFadden has refused to respond to questionnaires from any political group.

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# All out fight to save gay marriage in California

## Ballot battles in other states also expected to be close

By CHRIS JOHNSON

The campaigns for and against a ballot measure that would ban same-sex marriage in California were clamoring this week to win the support of a small group of undecided voters that could decide the measure's fate on Election Day.

The fight over the measure, known as Proposition 8, is being watched by activists around the country as a watershed in the fight for gay marriage. Earlier this year, California became the second and largest state to allow gay couples to marry. Proposition 8 attempts to turn back that milestone.

If voters defeat the attempt to again ban gay marriage, activists say it could help the cause of marriage equality around the country. Should the measure pass, overturning gay marriage in California, it would be a major setback for gay issues.

To reach undecided voters through television ads, the "No on 8" campaign called for continued donations to help keep up with funding for the "Yes on 8" campaign.

While "No on 8" last month began appealing to opponents of the ban for more donations to match funding raised by the other side, the "No on 8" campaign has now apparently taken the lead in raising money.

As of Monday, those working against the ban had raised a few million dollars more than their rivals, according to numbers from the Los Angeles Times. The "No on 8" campaign had received about $32.7 million, while the "Yes on 8" campaign had about $28.2 million.

During a conference call Oct. 24, Neil Giuliano, president of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, said "every penny will be spent" in donations to the "No on 8" campaign.

As supporters and opponents made one last push regarding California's Proposition 8, donations to defeat the effort to ban same-sex marriage were ahead of donations supporting it. (Photo by AP)

"We need people to contribute — there's media that still needs to be bought for important markets within California," he said. "This election is going to be won or lost on Election Day and that means having the resources to do everything you need to do in that last 24 to 36 hours before the election."

Matt Cole, director of the gay rights project for the American Civil Liberties Union, said on the call that "the polls are all over the place" for the amendment, known as Proposition 8.

While about 40 percent of California residents were solidly against the amendment and another 40 percent were solidly favoring it, remaining voters respond differently to the issue at different moments.

A survey published Oct. 22 by the Public Policy Institute of California found that the amendment is losing among likely voters, with 52 percent opposing the measure and 44 percent supporting it.

But an Oct. 17 poll by SurveyUSA found Proposition 8 leading among California residents, 48-45. The poll's authors noted that the measure's three-point lead was within the margin of error and the findings should be interpreted as a statistical tie.

Cole said "No on 8" was trying to win over undecided voters with TV ads refuting accusations that the failure of Proposition 8 would mean same-sex marriage would have to be taught in public schools.

Additionally, "No on 8" was telling California voters that no matter their position on same-sex marriage, no one should have their rights taken away or suffer discrimination, Cole said.

**FLA. FIGHT** While California's Proposition 8 was the top issue for many gay activists, other states are facing gay-relat-

Please see **PROP 8** on **Page 11**

# Could lesbian stun GOP incumbent in S.C.?

## Activists keep close eye on key congressional races

By AMY CAVANAUGH

With a few days to go before Election Day, several gay and gay-friendly candidates in races across the nation are eclipsing or closing in on their opponents.

One key race is the U.S. House contest from South Carolina's 1st congressional district, where Democrat Linda Ketner is challenging incumbent Rep. Henry Brown (R-S.C.).

According to an Oct. 22 poll by Research 2000, Ketner, who is a lesbian, trailed Brown by 11 percentage points, with Brown earning 48 percent and Ketner taking 37 percent.

But an Oct. 27 poll by Survey USA had Brown leading Ketner, 50-45, with a margin of error of about 4 percent. Five percent of those surveyed were undecided. The poll also reported that 20 percent of likely voters are black, a group that Ketner leads 7 to 1, so a large black turnout on Election Day would benefit the Democratic challenger.

Hastings Wyman, the founding editor of Southern Political Report, said that the race is "leaning Republican, but only leaning," and that Ketner can win.

"Fifty to 45 points is a weak lead for an incumbent," he said. "She's not the favorite, but she's got a shot."

Marty Rouse, national field director for the Human Rights Campaign, said that Ketner is "performing surprisingly well in a strong conservative district," and it is "possible" for her to win.

Denis Dison, a Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund spokesperson, said the organization has been involved in Ketner's campaign.

"She was endorsed early in the process, and we've been working with her ever since," he said. "We have not made direct contributions, as we're temporarily not a federal PAC, but we have done mailings for her. We were also paid by her campaign to do work for her with folks on our list who want to help fund openly LGBT candidates."

Brown voted last year against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and hate crimes legislation. He also voted in favor of the Federal Marriage Amendment in 2004 and 2006.

Ketner, a businesswoman, is a founding member of South Carolina Equality and served on the organization's board of directors for years. She is no longer on the board, but remains a major donor.

Ketner's sexual orientation has not been an issue in this race, something that Wyman attributes to Charleston, one of South Carolina's largest cities, being in the congressional district.

Democrat **Linda Ketner** is challenging incumbent U.S. Rep. Henry Brown (R) in South Carolina's 1st congressional district. A recent poll shows her within five points of overtaking Brown. (Photo by AP)

"Charleston is a port city, and it is traditionally not a fundamentalist Christian city," he said. "I'm not saying that Charleston is really liberal, as they're generally fairly conservative, but they show some liberal sides."

Also drawing attention is Colorado's Jared Polis, who is running for the open U.S. House seat in Colorado's 2nd District.

Polis is running against Republican Scott Starin. Polis, who is expected to win, would become the first openly gay man elected to Congress as a non-incumbent and join Reps. Barney Frank and Tammy Baldwin as Congress' only out members.

Rouse said that his organization's "highest priority" for U.S. Senate elections is Jeanne Shaheen, the former governor of New Hampshire, who is running against incumbent Republican John Sununu.

"Shaheen is a strong supporter of the GLBT community, especially when she was governor," Rouse said. "She started moving New Hampshire in a much more GLBT-friendly direction. She repealed an adoption ban for gays and lesbians and supported a GLBT civil rights bill. She will be a strong ally for us in the Senate."

**GAY-RIGHTS OPPONENTS** Two other races pit strongly anti-gay U.S. House members against pro-gay, Democratic challengers. And the course of both races recently changed.

Last week the National Republican Campaign Committee pulled advertising from the re-election campaigns of Rep. Michele Bachmann (Minn.) and Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (Colo.).

In Colorado, Musgrave is trying to fend off Democrat Betsy Markey. A poll published Aug. 28 by SurveyUSA found that 50 percent of respondents favored Markey while 43 percent favored Musgrave.

Musgrave, who came to Congress in 2003, introduced the Federal Marriage Amendment in the House during the 108th and 109th Congresses. She also voted against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

"A Musgrave defeat would mean recognition that stomping on the GLBT community could lead to being kicked out of Congress," Rouse said.

Bachmann, another anti-gay lawmaker who is running against Democrat Elwyn Tinklenberg, made headlines Oct. 17 when she questioned whether Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama harbors "anti-American views."

# Ballot measures target gay marriage, adoption

PROP 8 continued from Page 10

ed Election Day votes.

Florida voters will vote on an amendment that would constitutionally ban same-sex marriage and civil unions. Gay nuptials are already outlawed by Florida state statute.

An Orlando Sentinel poll published Oct. 23 found that 56 percent of likely voters in Florida were supporting the measure, known as Amendment 2, while 37 percent oppose it.

The remaining seven percent of voters were to decide whether the amendment meets the 60 percent threshold of approval needed for the proposed amendment to become part of the state constitution.

Supporters of Amendment 2 were arguing that the failure of Florida's amendment "could result in the indoctrination of schoolchildren into a gay lifestyle," according to an Oct. 22 article in the Palm Beach Post.

Nadine Smith, a co-chair of the "Vote No on 2" committee, called the approach a "recycled argument" from opponents of gay nuptials in other states and said she doesn't think most people would buy it.

"The good news is when people understand what this amendment actually does — that it strips away essential domestic partner benefits from all unmarried couples, gay and straight — they choose to vote 'no,'" she said.

According to the Florida Division of Elections web site, the Florida4Marriage committee has dedicated about $1 million in favor of the amendment, while the Florida Red & Blue committee has allocated about $3.3 million to fight the measure.

But Smith said proponents of the ban might have used money they didn't disclose.

She noted that Florida Red & Blue filed a complaint Oct. 21 with the Florida Election Commission, alleging that money was funneled from Florida Family Action — a nonprofit organization not required to disclose its donations — to fund the TV ads favoring the amendment.

Florida Family Action did not respond to a request for comment.

**ARIZ. AGAIN** Voters in Arizona also were to decide on Election Day the fate of another marriage amendment, known as Proposition 102.

If approved, the amendment would prohibit same-sex marriage in the state. Arizona voters narrowly rejected a similar amendment in 2006 that was broader and would have affected benefits for unmarried straight couples. The amendment on the ballot this fall was geared toward simply prohibiting same-sex marriage.

A Cronkite/Eight poll published Sept. 30 found that 49 percent of Arizona residents favor the amendment while 42 percent oppose it. Nine percent were undecided.

Arizona State Del. Kyrsten Sinema (D), who serves chair of the campaign to defeat the amendment, said the "No on 102" campaign was "happy to see" that a majority of Arizona residents did not favor the amendment.

"We think it's really important to win California and Florida and Arizona this year," she said. "It would send a clear message to the radical right and to the Mormon church that what they're doing is not appropriate and that the American people are not going to stand for it."

**ARK. ADOPTION** Meanwhile, a call to think of the children was having a beneficial effect for opponents of an anti-gay amendment in Arkansas.

Arkansas voters on Election Day will decide the fate of a measure that would prevent unmarried cohabiting couples from adopting. The initiative, known as Proposed Initiated Act 1, was seen as an effort to prevent gay couples from adopting children in the state.

The initiative is a proposed state statute and would not be part of the Arkansas Constitution. The Arkansas Family Council last year tried to pass the measure through the Arkansas General Assembly, but failed.

Arkansas Families First, the group fighting the amendment, was airing a television ad featuring children and former foster children who say that thousands of children in Arkansas live in group homes and Act 1 would "make it harder" for potential parents to adopt these children.

Debbie Willhite, the lead consultant for Arkansas Families First, said her organization had an aggressive campaign from the beginning and just "in the last few weeks been able to get enough money together to go on the air."

"Our message has been very simple - this act would deny children most in need every possible option they might have for a family and people that would care for them," she said.

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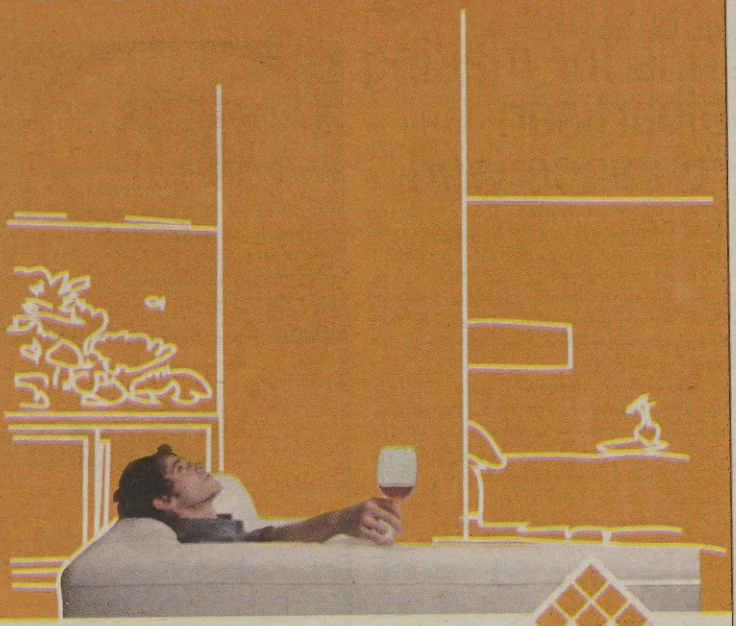

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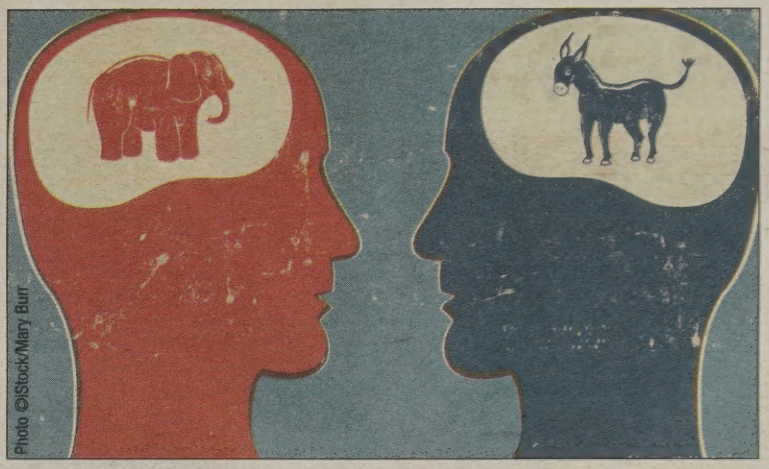
# Finding love across party lines

## Tips for making bipartisan romance work

By RYAN LEE
*rlee@sovo.com*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ELECTION 2008
ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

When the election results are finalized — whether John McCain or Barack Obama is victorious — it will mark the beginning of the end of a particularly bitter era between gay Democrats and Republicans.

"The one positive thing about this election is George W. Bush is going to be out of the White House," said Charlie Stadtlander, a former Log Cabin Republican leader who recently left the Republican Party.

"When you've got a Republican president out there making a central part of his platform the Federal Marriage Amendment, when that happens and you're a gay Republican, it creates a lot of animosity in the gay community," added Stadtlander, who became an independent because of his objections to the anti-gay views of Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

"It's such a relief to know people on both sides of the aisle are able to be friends again, and are at least talking to each other again during this election," he said.

There should be plenty of time to talk while waiting to vote. Gay and lesbian voters are sure to have a strong presence at voting precincts throughout the city and surrounding areas, and with some sources predicting waits of up to six hours on Election Day, there's no better way to pass the time than checking out politically conscious eye candy.

Add to the memories of this historic election by making Nov. 4 the day you met your lifelong partner in a voting line. If you're voting at any the city's heavily gay precincts, leave the book, Ipod and other distractions at home — it's time to cruise!

But if you do make that love connection, remember that election season "is usually a pretty tough time" for bipartisan relationships, said Jamie Ensley, president of the Georgia Log Cabin Republicans.

"It's difficult right now, but most [non-election] years it's not so bad," said Ensley, who recalled dating someone who then later learned Ensley is a Republican.

"He went, literally, screaming out the bar," Ensley said.

But just because you date someone with a different political philosophy doesn't mean it has to create disagreements.

"A lot of times we agreed on much more than we disagreed," Stadtlander said of former Democratic boyfriends.

Entering into a bipartisan partnership also requires a level of maturity when it comes to expressing and receiving opposing viewpoints.

"I also think if two people are not capable of having a discussion about politics, or they can't agree to disagree, I think that might be a sign of things other than a political disagreement," Stadtlander said. "[Bipartisan couples] are able to communicate in a way that's positive, and they want to hear what viewpoints their partner has, and can listen without getting offended."

Many times gay conservatives are reduced to the self-loathing stereotype — a characterization that can sabotage any relationship.

"It's important to respect each other's views and respect each other as individuals — don't belittle them or call them crazy," Ensley said.

One of the perks of getting friendly with the opposing team?

"You always have something to talk about," Ensley said.

## Prime times to cast your ballot

There's bound to be a long line whenever you turnout to vote, but here are a few tongue-in-cheek suggestions on the best times to visit the voting booth:

**After leaving the club** — Anyone who attends the "Stars of the Century" drag show at Jungle, or spends Monday night playing "Strip Glow" pool at BJ Roosters or Texas Hold 'em at Woof's, could practically head straight to their voting precinct after leaving the club.

If you arrive to vote at 3 a.m., there will probably be only 500 people waiting in line ahead of you, and you can pretend like you're camping out for free tickets to a Madonna concert.

**Lunch break** — Oh, the joy of saying to your boss, "I'm about to go vote and grab something to eat, I'll be back in a little while," and then not return until the next day! If you do go to vote on your lunch break, be sure to take your meal to the voting place with you — and depending on the size of the line, you may want to bring dinner and a few survival packs as well.

Arrive at the polling place between noon and 2 p.m., and you'll likely cast your ballot right in time for happy hour.

**6 p.m.** — This is the best voting time for drama queens to shine. By cutting it so close to the 7 p.m. deadline, these voters ensure that they'll be standing in line well throughout the night — just in time for all of the television crews to arrive and interview die-hard late voters. Standing in line will make you miss dinner and happy hour — and possibly Christmas — but by the time you cast your ballot the victory parties will have already started.

# Partying for a new president

By RYAN LEE
*rlee@sovo.com*

No matter which way the vote turns out Nov. 4, there's already one clear winner of this protracted presidential campaign: Amsterdam Atlanta.

Since Super Tuesday in February, the Midtown bar has been Atlanta's gay election headquarters, packing in hundreds of revelers for everything from the vice presidential debate to the primetime speech Barack Obama delivered Wednesday evening. Amsterdam's election activities culminate with a viewing party Nov. 4, with more than 500 people expected to gather to watch the historic returns.

"It has been amazing, absolutely amazing," said Amsterdam owner Early Duffy. "It's a really, really neat feeling."

Amsterdam agreed to host a Super Tuesday election party after being approached by several Democratic organizations. Organizers expected about 200 people at that first event, but when more than 500 people turned out, Amsterdam owners knew they had a winning ticket for the 2008 campaign.

"It was quite a pleasant surprise, to say the least," Duffy said. "The day after, I said we need to hop on the debate bus and ride this thing all the way through. I do not recall seeing this level of interest and concern in an election in my lifetime."

The election parties at Amsterdam have garnered mentions on Obama's official campaign website, and attracted media attention at the same rate as Atlanta's iconic political bar, Manuel's Tavern. They've also created an atmosphere of intense camaraderie for gay and other progressive voters.

"It is extremely, extremely energetic," Duffy said. "When certain points get hit [in the debates and speeches], it's like you've got a room full of people watching a football game and a touchdown has been scored. It's a fun, very unique night.

"Sometimes within the gay community, there's a bit of apathy or a lack of interest with the election, but that doesn't seem to be happening this year," said Duffy, who added that he is particularly proud of the diversity of the crowds Amsterdam has attracted.

"It's a tremendous mix of people — it's gay, it's straight, it's 21, it's 50, it's 60, it's 65, it's very ethnically mixed, and there's definitely not any tunnel vision about it at all," Duffy said. "It's truly, truly incredible."

To accommodate a larger crowd on election night, Amsterdam plans to open its dance floor area and install additional video screens. Televisions throughout the bar will be tuned to CNN and a local news channel, and Amsterdam's kitchen will remain open for an extra two hours until midnight.

"I would gather that things are going to hang on a cliff until late in the evening," Duffy said of results in the presidential election, adding that the Amsterdam crowd will also be eagerly anticipating the results of the same-sex marriage ballot initiative in California.

### Gay Election Night Events

**Amsterdam Atlanta**
502 Amsterdam Ave.
404-892-2227, myspace.com/AmsterdamAtlanta

**Stonewall Democrats @ Halo**
817 W. Peachtree St.
404-962-7333, stonewalldemocrats.org

**Human Rights Campaign, Victory Fund & Georgia Equality**
Marlow's Tavern, 950 West Peachtree St.

**Mark Ultra Lounge**
79 Poplar St., 678-904-0050
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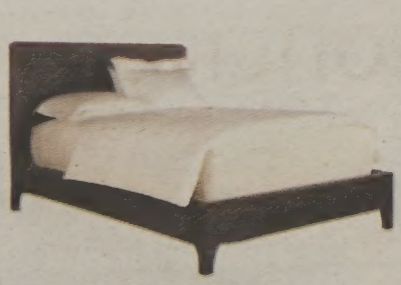
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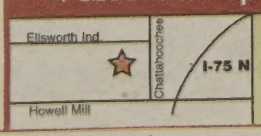


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# AIDS bias continues despite legal protections, advocates say

## City of Atlanta faces HIV-bias charges for second time in two years

By RYAN LEE
*rlee@sovo.com*

Atlanta is generally considered a forward-thinking city with progressive elected officials, but city leaders continue to tiptoe toward the 1980s when taking certain positions on HIV and AIDS. For the second time in two years, city officials are allegedly "digging in their heels" to defend policies related to HIV/AIDS that have been discredited by science for decades.

In court papers filed this month, city officials denied that the Atlanta Police Department refused to hire an applicant because he tested positive for HIV, as alleged in a federal lawsuit. A former police recruit, who is identified in the lawsuit by the alias "Richard Roe," claimed that in September 2006 a doctor who conducts physical examinations on behalf of the city informed him that he was HIV-positive, and that the police department does not hire HIV-positive individuals.

But a spokesperson for Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin said the man was not hired because he didn't complete the physical, which is required for all city employees. After the applicant tested HIV-positive during the initial physical, "the physician attempted to contact the recruit several times" for a follow-up, said Franklin spokesperson Beverly Isom.

"For whatever reason, he chose not to go back to the physician," Isom said. "He simply had to go back for a follow-up. This isn't about HIV, this is about him [not finishing] the physical.

"The city could not offer him a job not because of what the test results were, but because he didn't pass the physical," Isom added.

But when the applicant filed a discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in December 2006, the city responded that the HIV diagnosis was "a disqualifying condition."

"Because applicants are required to engage in hand-to-hand combat in the Police Academy and subsequently [in] the field, diseases passed through the blood present a hazardous condition and as such are disqualifying conditions," the city's response to the EEOC stated.

Roe's attorneys, Michael Grider and Steve Koval, declined to comment.

The city's claim that the applicant was fired because he didn't complete his physical exam "does not seem to match with what they represented to the EEOC," said Greg Nevins, a senior staff attorney in the Atlanta office of Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund.

"They're still trying to backtrack from that," Nevins said. "There's a difference from saying we have an additional reason, but when you say it was never about HIV, from what we know so far it doesn't seem like that is likely to fly."

The city's response to the EEOC also accuses the applicant of "failure to comply with the recruitment process" by being "unresponsive."

"As an applicant, once you enter the process, we're supposed to be able to reach you within a reasonable amount of time," Al Elder, director of diversity for the city of Atlanta's Human Resources department, said this week.

The thought that HIV would be a disqualification from employment as a police officer is absurd, Isom said.

"I have to believe there are people who have HIV [working in the department]," Isom said.

### 'GROSS EXAMPLES' OF DISCRIMINATION?

Richard Roe's lawsuit is the second incident in two years where the city, specifically the police department, faces discrimination complaints for allegedly adopting outdated views on HIV and its transmission. In fall 2006, several HIV-positive massage therapists threatened to sue the city when they were denied massage licenses from APD because they had a communicable disease.

Even though HIV/AIDS cannot be passed via touching and other casual contact, Franklin's administration strongly defended the APD policy and classified HIV-positive massage therapists as a "direct threat" to public safety. The mayor begrudgingly reversed course two months later when the Atlanta City Council voted to eliminate the ban on HIV-positive massage therapists.

"The mayor supported the ordinance as an ordinance then, she supports the ordinance as an ordinance now," Franklin spokesperson Catherine Woodling said at the time.

Nevins called it baffling that city officials would suggest HIV can be transmitted through a massage or routine police work.

"The idea that they really seem to dig their heels over that, I find very surprising," Nevins said. "This is not just a progressive city, but a city that happens to have the remarkable luxury of having highly respected experts on these issues, so it would be easy to consult with somebody and see that this isn't a good idea."

Blatant instances of HIV discrimination — such as parents rallying to prevent an HIV-positive student like Ryan White from attending class with their children, or EMTs refusing to administer first aid to someone believed to have AIDS — have largely receded into history. But they continue to sprout up occasionally, like in May when an HIV-positive Texas man was sentenced to 35 years in prison for assaulting a police officer with a "deadly weapon" by spitting on him.

"Even though we know that saliva doesn't transmit HIV," said Kali Lindsey, vice president for federal government affairs at the National Association of People With AIDS.

The Texas and Atlanta incidents are "gross examples of discrimination" and "allow the perpetuation of stigma and inaccurate information about how HIV is transmitted," Lindsey said.

"My concern is there continues to be inaccurate information that is causing unnecessary concerns for people with HIV," Lindsey said.

### 'PRESUMED GUILTY'

Aside from the city of Atlanta, few employers still admit in writing that a person is being terminated or denied a job because of their HIV status.

"Workers are let go or denied jobs for other reasons, but it's only after their HIV status has been learned," Lindsey said.

HIV-positive workers are protected from discrimination by various laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act, but "there's a lot of concern in the community about how accurately and consistently those regulations are being enforced," Lindsey said.

Activists are also worried that the Department of Health & Human services is still enforcing a travel ban preventing HIV-positive visitors from entering the United States, even though the ban was repealed by Congress in July. Another perceived source of HIV discrimination is the criminal prosecution HIV-positive individuals face in more than 32 states, including Georgia, if they are accused of not disclosing their status to sex partners.

"The people that are convicted are people that are charged," Lindsey said. "Overwhelmingly, because of the continued stigma around HIV, the person at risk is given the preference over the person with HIV. The person with HIV is presumed guilty."

Mayor **Shirley Franklin**'s administration said the city did not discriminate against a police department applicant because he has HIV, the second time in two years that the administration has defended the city against allegations of HIV discrimination. (File photo)

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# Doraville set to approve transgender protections

## Vote expected at City Council meeting next week

By MATT SCHAFER
*mschafer@sovo.com*

The city of Doraville appears set to become the third municipality in Georgia to extend its employee non-discrimination policy to include gender identity. The City Council is expected to vote on the measure at its Nov. 3 meeting.

"I just think this is something we need to do," Doraville Mayor Pro Tem Bob Roche said during the City Council's Oct. 27 work session. "If we are going to be a city of diversity we should be a city that doesn't discriminate. I plan to bring up that motion at the next meeting and hopefully we'll have enough support to get it passed."

The council's discussion of the transgender policy was brief and uncontroversial, lasting five minutes of a lengthy meeting. Mayor Ray Jenkins suggested there was widespread support for the additional protections.

"I don't see any problems getting it passed, when do you want to set up the trainings?" Jenkins said.

Although the details have not been determined, there will be training sessions on transgender sensitivity issues for the city's employees. Atlanta Police Department GLBT liaison Danni Lee Harris has volunteered to help with the training sessions

Doraville City Attorney Murray Weed finished working on the policy the afternoon before the meeting after consulting with Cole Thaler, national transgender rights attorney for Lambda Legal. Thaler, who is based in Lambda's Atlanta office, and Jeff Graham, the executive director of Georgia Equality, met with Roche, gay City Council member Brian Bates and Police Chief John King before drawing up the policy.

If Doraville approves the policy, it will join a growing number of cities that have extended their non-discrimination statements to include transgender employees. Atlanta and Decatur both included transgender protections in 2000.

### SUPPORT FOR TRANSITION

Bates, an openly gay Republican, opposed including gender identity in the nondiscrimination statement when it was amended to include sexual orientation in a vote on Sept. 2. Bates said he wanted policies and procedures in place before enacting the law.

"We wanted to make sure that ... we had the policies and procedures in place to support the employees and to make sure they were treated fairly and equitably, and those are in the works," Bates said.

The decision to split the sexual orientation and gender expression statements into different pieces of legislation angered some, like Stephe Koontz, who identifies as "openly transgendered male-to-female."

Mayor Pro Tem **Bob Roche** introduced legislation for sexual orientation and gender identity protections in Doraville. (Photo by Matt Schafer)

"You put the law in place and then you figure out the procedure," said Koontz, who is happy that the gender identity piece is now moving forward.

For Roche, passing this legislation is a matter of morality.

"I can't see leaving anyone off the list. In my mind any kind of discrimination is immoral," he said.

The policy, as proposed, requires transgender employees to notify the mayor's office in writing of their intention to transition, and conform to dress and behavior standards of the gender with which they identify.

"The City is committed to the non-discrimination and non-harassment of transgender individuals and to supporting transgender individuals in the workplace both during and after the transitioning process," the policy reads. "However, the City can only do so if it is aware of the situation. It is, therefore, the employee's responsibility to provide the City with such notice in writing to the Mayor about the employee's transgender intentions, needs, and concerns."

An employee's name and gender will not change in their personnel file until legally changed and approved by a Superior Court judge.

Now that the legislation has been discussed it can be voted on at the regular City Council meeting on Nov. 3. The Doraville City Council encourages public participation in its meeting and will allow interested members of the public to speak on the policy before the vote.

**Doraville City Council Meeting**
Nov. 2, 7 p.m.
3725 Park Ave., Doraville
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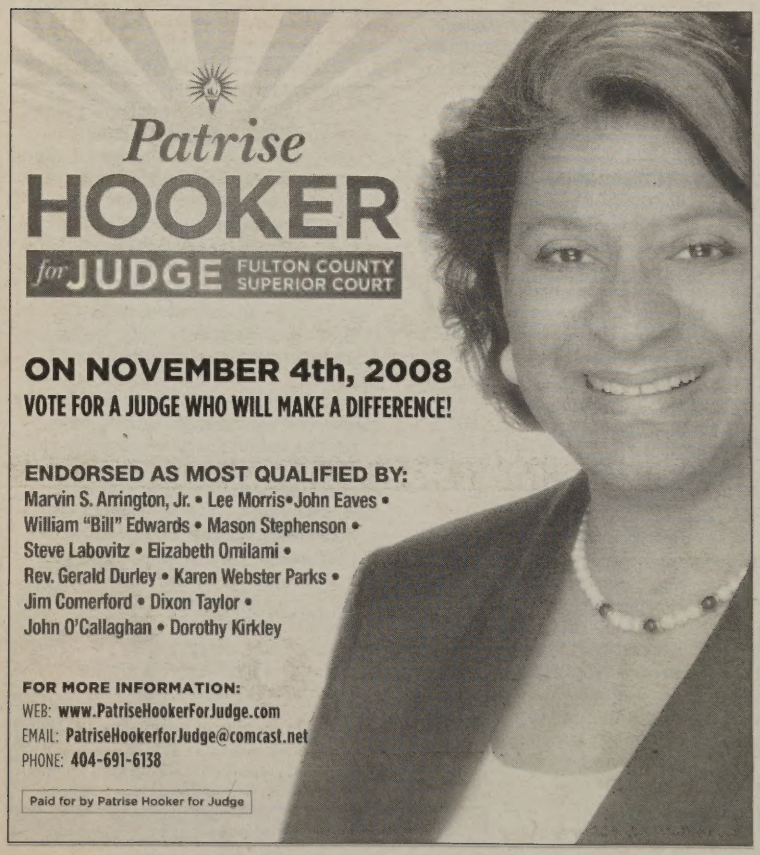
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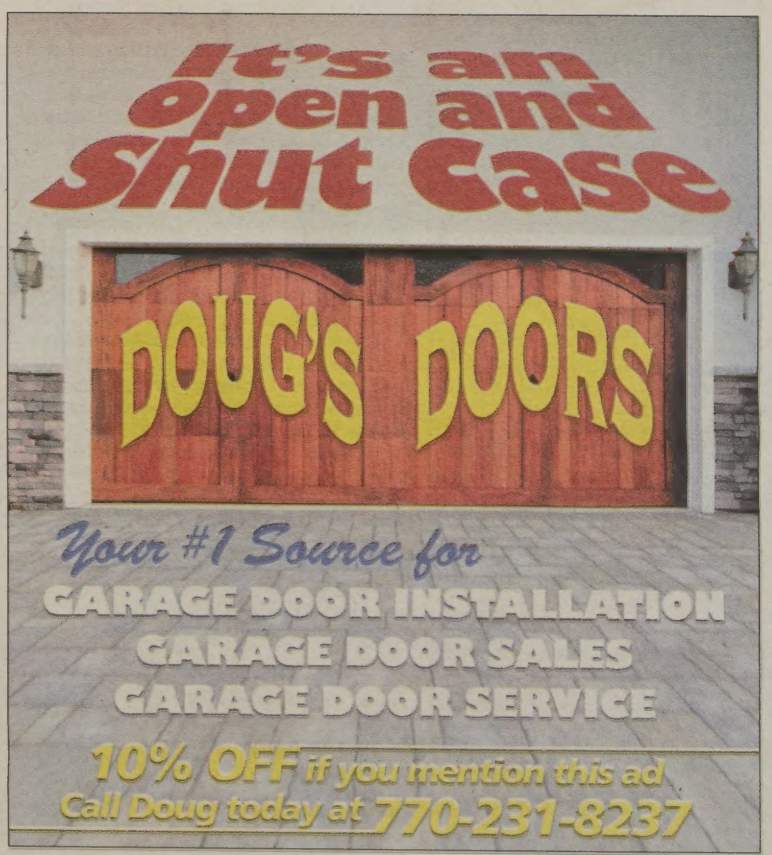
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## FRIEND or FOE

### FRIENDS

Straight allies can sometimes be the best friends to gay families. In the ongoing battle for marriage equality in California, the straight parents who allowed their children to go on a school field trip to watch their lesbian teacher get married are angered their children are being used in an advertisement to try to rally support — and fundraising efforts — by those in favor of the anti-gay ballot measure known as Prop 8.

The straight parents who support a gay person's right to marry aren't taking this "hijacking" of their children without a fight, sending letters to the anti-gay Yes on Prop 8 group and holding a press conference last week denouncing the surly tactics the so-called traditional family values organization is resorting to in the last days before the crucial election.

Hopefully voters will be informed enough to opt out of supporting a proposition that would stop gay marriage in California, and vote No on Prop 8.

### FOE

Jerry Lewis (Photo by AP)

That slapstick comedian Jerry Lewis took another slap at the gays when he decided to use the derided "f" word when describing the game of cricket while on tour in Australia.

According to news reports, a reporter asked Lewis, 82, his opinion of the wildly popular Down Under game of cricket.

"Oh, cricket? It's a fag game. What are you, nuts?" Lewis answered.

Lewis, known in recent years for his annual Labor Day telethon that raises millions of dollars for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, also made headlines in September 2007 when he called someone a "faggot" on-air during the telethon.

Lewis was asked to apologize then for uttering the anti-gay slur, and he did. But he apparently didn't learn his lesson that using "faggot" to describe a person, or a game, is just not funny. And, honestly, neither is he.

— Dyana Bagby

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EDITORIAL

# Do your part to turn Ga. blue

## On Tuesday, we can help elect the most gay-friendly president in history, and send a friend to the U.S. Senate

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

**IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THIS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION** is finally nearing the end. Looking back on the best and worst on gay issues from almost two years of campaigning, it is clearer than ever why gay voters must turn out en masse to elect Barack Obama.

More than a year ago, the Democratic presidential hopefuls took the stage for the Logo/HRC forum, sitting down one by one to answer questions from noted lesbian political expert Melissa Etheridge, among others.

But what should have been a throwaway question from Etheridge to New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson — do you think being gay is a choice? — turned into the evening's most memorable moment, when Richardson answered yes. He later tried to clarify that he just meant that gay people should be free to choose to live their lives however they want, but the damage was done.

On the opposite end of the Democratic spectrum from Richardson were U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel and U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich, who each said wonderful things about supporting gay marriage, and each had only a slightly better chance of being elected president than my grandmothers (who are both dead).

The race for the Democratic nomination narrowed quickly, and soon we were down to what was for many gay voters a gut-wrenching decision: the choice between Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. Hillary Clinton.

Either would have been the most gay-friendly president in history, but Obama edged Clinton on gay issues in two key areas: He supported total repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act, while Clinton advocated repealing only the part dealing with federal recognition of gay marriage, and he showed a greater propensity to include gay issues in speeches to non-gay audiences.

**THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY ALSO HAD THE POTENTIAL** to make history on acceptance for gay citizens.

Many gay Republicans cheered the candidacy of former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who lived with a gay male couple during his divorce and was comfortable enough to dress in drag for a New York benefit. But those hopes were dashed when Giuliani failed to articulate a campaign platform beyond, as eventual Democratic vice presidential nominee Joe Biden quipped, "a noun, a verb, and 9/11."

Mitt Romney also showed early potential, having sought the endorsement of Log Cabin during previous races. In his failed 1994 attempt to unseat Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), Romney pledged to support a host of gay issues, and even promised to "make equality for gays and lesbians a mainstream concern." When he ran for governor of Massachusetts in 2002, his campaign distributed fliers at a gay pride parade.

But rather than moving the Republican Party towards the center in his presidential bid, Romney only proved how quickly he could run to the right, repudiating all of his formerly moderate stands on gay issues.

Eventually the GOP field was winnowed to just Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, who took on the role of the scrappy outsider, making Sen. John McCain the unlikely party favorite.

Especially compared to Huckabee's wildly anti-gay pronouncements, like his comment that "it's a lot easier to change the Constitution than it would be to change the word of the living God," McCain gave a moderate face to the party. The gay Log Cabin Republicans were right to cheer his nomination.

**BUT CHEERING MCCAIN'S NOMINATION AS A SIGN** of progress for the GOP and issuing an endorsement urging gay people to vote for him are two vastly different things.

There may be other reasons why voters who happen to be gay might choose to vote for John McCain, but there simply are no specifically gay reasons to vote for him over Obama.

Earlier this month, McCain gave an email interview to Window Media, Southern Voice's parent company. It was the first known time that a GOP presidential nominee has answered questions from the gay press, a commendable decision by the McCain camp.

Yet McCain's kind words about Mark Bingham, the gay rugby player who died in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and broad statements about "being a president for all Americans" could not obscure the fact that McCain remains opposed to every single item on the so-called "gay agenda" — from adding sexual orientation to federal hate crimes laws to banning anti-gay job bias or granting legal rights to gay couples.

He offered positive answers only on his current opposition to amending the Constitution to ban gay marriage (though he has suggested that could change if more states legalize it) and his willingness to study the issue of repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

If these answers are the best the GOP presidential nominee can do for gay citizens, that's less a sign of how good he is, and more a sign of how bad the party is when it comes to our equality.

For gay voters who make our civil rights an issue at the ballot box, as all of us should, there simply is no other choice but to vote for Obama.

**THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE ISN'T THE ONLY REASON** it is crucial that gay Georgians go to the polls by Tuesday.

The second race on the ticket, for one of Georgia's two seats in the U.S. Senate, offers an equally stark choice.

Democrat Jim Martin is polling much closer to GOP incumbent Sen. Saxby Chambliss than prevailing political wisdom would have suggested even two months ago.

Martin is still the underdog, but the race is close enough that the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee is pouring money into the race, and national gay groups like the Human Rights Campaign and Stonewall Democrats are actively working to help his campaign.

There, as in the presidential race, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender voters will choose between polar opposites on our issues.

Chambliss, the Republican incumbent, scored a dismal 20 out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's 2008 congressional scorecard on gay issues. That's after earning scores of zero on the 2004 and 2005 reports.

Martin was an early advocate for HIV funding and sodomy law reform during his years in the state legislature. He supports civil unions, overturning the military's gay ban and banning anti-gay and anti-trans job bias, among other issues.

Besides adding a supportive vote in the U.S. Senate on key gay rights bills, Martin's election — especially if combined with Obama winning or coming close in Georgia — would break the GOP stranglehold on state politics, hopefully allowing future candidates from both parties to run without feeling that they have to take anti-gay positions to be viable.

But it can only happen if you vote.

Editor **Laura Douglas-Brown** can be reached at **lbrown@sovo.com**

# viewpoints

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# Court-ing the LGBT vote

## Judicial appointments have never been more important

**By ARNOLD FLEISCHMANN**

**ECONOMIC CRISIS? BANK RESCUE? GLOBAL** warming? Iraq war? Immigration? Education?

All of these problems — and more — figure prominently in this year's presidential election. Yet, addressing these issues will involve a lot more political players than the next president. There is one area, though, in which the president clearly sets the agenda: choosing federal judges.

Perhaps at no point in recent history has the selection of judges been more important to LGBT voters. Surprisingly, it remains below the radar in this year's election.

The Supreme Court began its annual term on Oct. 6. The next president could end up appointing at least two justices, most likely to replace the court's more progressive, but oldest, members.

Justice John Paul Stevens is 88. Ruth Bader Ginsberg is 75. Anthony Kennedy is 72. Stephen Breyer is 70. David Souter is 69. Those are the five of the six justices who voted in 2003 to overturn state laws banning same-sex sodomy in Lawrence v. Texas. The other vote came from Sandra Day O'Connor, who was replaced in 2006 by President Bush's nominee, Samuel Alito, who is only 58. The members who voted to uphold the Texas law were Justices Antonin Scalia (age 72) and Clarence Thomas (60), who form the court's right wing, and the late Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who was replaced in 2005 by John Roberts (53), another Bush appointee.

In an October press release, the White House boasted of Bush's appointment of Roberts and Alito, and also reminded Americans that the president had appointed more than one-third of all federal judges now on the bench. The release added, of course, that Bush's appointees "apply the laws as written" and don't "advance their own agendas."

That's code for conservative.

**SCALIA AND THOMAS HAVE LONG BEEN WILLING** to overturn Roe v. Wade. They voted to uphold the Texas sodomy law. As demonstrated in two 2003 cases involving the University of Michigan, they have opposed affirmative action in almost any form.

Some readers might remember Lilly Ledbetter from the Democratic Convention. She lost her sex discrimination suit against Goodyear on appeal to the Supreme Court in 2007 because she supposedly didn't file her lawsuit soon enough, even though it takes time to gather evidence of patterns of discrimination. The majority opinion in this 5-4 decision was written by Justice Alito, who was joined by Scalia, Thomas, Roberts, and Kennedy.

The key votes in recent close decisions have been cast by moderates who have placed value on following previous decisions whenever possible. Oddly enough, these "swing" votes — formerly O'Connor, now only Kennedy — were appointed by Ronald Reagan. One of those who votes consistently moderate to liberal has been David Souter, who was appointed by President Bush's father.

The Department of Justice reports that 11 of the 178 positions on appeals courts below the Supreme Court are currently vacant. So are 33 of the 674 judgeships for federal courts where trials originate.

On his web site, John McCain pays homage to Roberts and Alito. He also praises the late Rehnquist, who undercut the authority of the national government compared to the states, including the rights of the disabled, which both Republicans and Democrats in Congress corrected in recent legislation signed by President Bush.

**THE BOTTOM LINE HERE FOR LGBT VOTERS IS** rather simple. Both major presidential candidates agree about closing Guantanamo and a few other issues. They disagree on many more. But the critical question on which they disagree that can have a major impact on LGBT concerns with limited interference from other political actors is picking federal judges.

With current and new vacancies, four years of an Obama presidency could go a long way to restoring balance to the federal judiciary.

**Arnold Fleischmann** is a faculty member in Political Science at the University of Georgia and the coauthor of "Politics in Georgia" (University of Georgia Press, 2007).

# MAILBOX

## No gay reason for Log Cabin to endorse McCain

**To the Editors:**

So the Log Cabin Republicans' endorse McCain/Palin for the presidential race against the most GLBT-friendly ticket this country has ever seen ... excuse me but if GLBT rights are not the most important issue to the Log Cabin folks, then why even call yourself a "gay" Republican organization?

Obama/Biden offers a proven track record of standing up for everything from hate crimes, ENDA, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and everything in between.

John McCain has never once stood up for GLBT folks and no, voting against the marriage amendment was simply stating to his party that the states have the right to ban gay marriage, not Uncle Sam.

Luckily I think even gay Republicans see Sarah Palin as simply Bush with lipstick, so I won't even bother going into her views about our community.

McCain even made it a point to go on TV in Arizona and plead with the public to pass legislation outlawing any form of marriage equality in his state.

So when I hear Log Cabin Republicans give reasons for their endorsements, I can just see McCain and Palin laughing behind the curtain thanking them for the easiest endorsement in their campaign; I mean they didn't even have to lift a finger and we have the gays! Yee Haw!

If you care at all about your rights and being viewed and treated as a valued Gay American, then please, do what your gut tells you and go with the ticket that is still standing behind you.

**MATT COMBEST**
Atlanta

## Vote Obama for fairness for lesbian, gay couples

**To the Editors:**

When my partner died of breast cancer in 1992, life and love, as I knew them, ended for me. Out of the desperation of my grief, I made the decision to attend four separate bereavement groups, each facilitated by psychologists and chaplains who had various backgrounds and experience.

When Pat passed away, the proceeds in the profit-sharing plan, which she had worked hard to accumulate for 25 years, had to be split between myself and the IRS — because Pat and I were not considered "legally" married, although we had been married by a Unitarian-Universalist pastor in 1986.

Had our union been respected as legal by our government and the IRS, I would have been in a less worrisome financial position. As we all know, the worst part of our government "not respecting"/"not legalizing" our marriages is that it takes away our right to equality. My love for Pat was the same as my parents' love for one another.

Barack Obama has a strong, consistent record of supporting us. He promises to work to make sure we are secure in our jobs, safe from hate crimes, and are equal in the eyes of the law.

The Nov. 4 election will affect every one of us. We must elect Barack Obama, plus other fair-minded Democrats to Congress, in order that they pass a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which Barack is eager to sign. They also need to work to repeal DOMA and the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy."

John McCain has never voted to progress LGBT equality. Barack has the desire and plan to help all of the people in our nation. He is certainly our best choice.

**BEVERLY COMBS**
Winston, Ga.

# SOUND OFF

## Passing TAD could help de-gay Midtown

**Re: "Vote for TAD" (viewpoint by Alex Wan, Oct. 24)**

As SoVo has whined all these years about the destruction of the gay businesses in Midtown, I find it interesting that SoVo would support the [Tax Allocation District] referendum. It's not that the TAD in general is bad, it's the use in Atlanta. Currently with the Beltline TAD, the remainder of the gay businesses are being planned for destruction.

Some 70 percent of the proposed TAD bond for the next five years is being used to purchase the parcel of land through Piedmont Park and Ansley Square. This has created the need to rezone all the property for much higher density. Along with this are areas outside the TAD boundary to include 10th & Piedmont. ...

If TADs were used to redevelop blighted, under utilized city areas, that would be great. The question is, why is 70 percent of the money being used to purchase one of the most developed and sought after property in the entire city.

SoVo, you need to get onboard to what is actually happening to Gay Midtown and report the facts. Or, are you just going to sit back and whine like you did as the Peachtree Corridor and Blueprint Midtown destroyed the gay presence along Peachtree. How soon we forget ... Backstreet, etc.

*Editors' note: Southern Voice has not endorsed the TAD. The article in question was a opinion column submitted by a SoVo reader urging support for the referendum.*

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SOVO SOUTHERN VOICE

# itinerary

NOV. 1 - NOV. 8

**TO ADD A LISTING...**
*e-mail calendar@sovo.com, call 404-876-1819, ext. 19, or fax to 404-876-2709, attn: Calendar editor. Entries should be submitted at least 14 days in advance of publication date.*

**SATURDAY** NOV. 1
The **2008 Pride Ride** takes 20 or 40 mile courses to raise money for Atlanta Pride. $25 in advance, $30 onsite. 7 a.m. at Piedmont Park. www.atlantapride.org

Folk-singer **Dar Williams** brings her acoustic repertoire to the early show in Decatur. 7 p.m. at Eddie's Attic, 515-B N. McDonough St. 404-377-4976, www.eddiesattic.com

**SUNDAY** NOV. 2
Affair with Flair hosts the black-attire-only **Black Party '08.** Attendees bring children's toys for donation to Toys for Tots. 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. VIP; 8 p.m.-1a.m. party at Tongue & Groove, 2420 Piedmont Road, Buckhead. Write: AffairWithFlair@aol.com

**TUESDAY** NOV. 4 (ELECTION DAY)
View results from the presidential campaign at the **Barack Obama official Watch Party** in Atlantic Station. 7 p.m. at Fox Sports Grill, 261 19th St. 404-249-9138, www.my.barackobama.com

Several gay venues and groups also host **Election Parties.** See page 13 for details.

**FRIDAY** NOV. 7
The movie **'Burn the Bridges'** screens as part of the ongoing Latin American Film Festival. In it, a girl has a crush on her brother, who in turn has crush on a boy at school. 8 p.m. at the Rich Theatre in the High Museum of Art, 1280 Peachtree St. 404-733-4400, www.high.org

**SATURDAY** NOV. 8
Charis Books & More **34th Birthday Party** offers daylong, store-wide discounts plus food, drinks and a big birthday cake. 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. at Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. 404-524-0304, www.charisbooksandmore.com

It's not too late to sign up for the one-day **OutlantaCon Gaming Convention.** Gay organizers offer games from role-playing to strategy gaming, plus plenty of board and card games. Proceeds benefit Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. 10 a.m. – midnight at Knights of Columbus, 2620 Buford Highway. 404-636-9237, www.outlantacon.org

**SATURDAY** NOV. 8 – **SATURDAY** NOV. 22
**17th Annual Book Festival of the Marcus Jewish Community Center** features distinguished authors such as Alda and Annie Leibovitz. The festival kicks off with 'Some Like Him Hot' actor Tony Curtis. For details, times and locations, visit www.atlantajcc.org or call 678-812-4000

**SATURDAY** NOV. 1
The dance club **Jungle** is back in full swing at 11 p.m. each Saturday, at the venue that it now shares with the Wild Mustang. **DJ Power Infiniti** gets the dance party going after the country music ends. 11 p.m. at Jungle/Wild Mustang. 2115 Faulkner Road. 404-844-8800, www.wildmustangatlanta.com

**WEDNESDAY** NOV. 5
**Rachel Sage** plays Decatur as part of the 'New Arrivals' Tour, featuring established and rising independent artists to benefit charity. 6:30 p.m. at Eddie's Attic, 515-B N. McDonough St. 404-377-4976, www.eddiesattic.com

**FRIDAY** NOV. 7
Award-winning comedian **Lily Tomlin** brings her one-woman show to town. 8 p.m. at Ferst Center for the Arts, 349 Ferst Drive NW. 404-894-9600, www.ferstcenter.gatech.edu

POWER INFINITI PHOTO BY DALE STINE, SAGE PHOTO FROM RACHELSAGE.COM, TOMLIN PHOTO FROM LAUGH.COM

# HALLOWEEN EVENTS

**FRIDAY OCT. 31**

**'Once Upon A Time' w/Ultra Naté and DJ Escape**
Fox Egyptian Ballroom, 10 p.m.
660 Peachtree St.
www.navigationatl.com

**Mary Edith Pitts Halloween w/Costume Contest**
Burkhart's, 9 p.m.
1492 Piedmont Ave.
www.burkharts.com

**'Eyes Wide Shut Masquerade' by Erotically Speaking**
Kat's Café, 8 p.m., 970 Piedmont Ave.
myspace.com/katscafeatlanta

**'Immortal Embrace' Vampire Glam**
My Sisters' Room, 9 p.m.
1271 Glenwood Ave.
myspace.com/mysistersroom

**Meow-Mix Halloween**
Blake's on the Park, 9 p.m.
227 10th St.
myspace.com/blakesonthepark

**Boo-T Ball & Nightmare on Amsterdam w/Costume Contest**
Amsterdam, 8 p.m.
502 Amsterdam Ave.

**Hall-o-weenie**
Mary's, 10 p.m., 1297 Glenwood Ave.
www.marysatlanta.com

**Texas Hold 'em Tournament Hearing aid benefit**
The Stage Door, 7 p.m.
4431 Hugh Howell Road, Tucker
770-414-9292, thestagedoor.biz

**Costume Contest Bellissima, 9 p.m.**
560-B Amsterdam Ave.
404-917-0220
myspace.com/bellissima_lounge

**Costume Contest w/Bubba D. Licious & DJ Rick Walsh**
The Heretic, 9 p.m.
1069 Cheshire Bridge Road
www.hereticatlanta.com

**Costume Contest w/ DJ Brett Long**
Atlanta Eagle, 9 p.m.
306 Ponce de Leon Ave.
www.atlantaeagle.com

**Costume Contest**
Bellissima, 9 p.m.
560-B Amsterdam Ave.
myspace.com/bellissima_lounge

**'Delivered' w/ 'Squeal like a Pig' Contest**
Felix's on the Square, 9 p.m.
1510 Piedmont Ave.

**TraxxGirls Dreams & Nightmares incl. fall fashion show**
Traxx, 10 p.m.
1287 Columbia Drive, Decatur
www.traxxatlanta.com

**Girlz & Goblins Masquerade**
Park Tavern, 10 p.m.
500 10th St.
www.girlsinthenight.com
www.girlology101.com

**SATURDAY NOV. 1**

**Halloween AfterHours w/DJ Brian Beck**
The Bodyshop, 2:30 a.m.
2675 Johnson Road
www.bodyshopatlanta.cm

**DJ Power Infiniti w/opener DJ Lamar**
Jungle/the Wild Mustang, 11 p.m.

**Traxx Invasion of the Zombie Costume Contest plus Fall Creep Fashion Show**
Traxx, 10 p.m.
1287 Columbia Drive, Decatur
www.traxxatlanta.com

**Mary Edith Pitts Halloween w/Costume Contest**
Burkhart's, 9 p.m.

**Halloween 'Thriller' w/ DJ Bill Berdeaux**
Bellissima, 9 p.m.

**Asians & Friends Halloween party Private residence**
www.aeatlanta.com

**Leather and Fetish Party w/ DJ Pat Scott**
Atlanta Eagle, 9 p.m.

**SUNDAY NOV. 2**

**Halloween T-Dance, then Armorettes Halloween show**
Burkhart's, 4 p.m.

**Halloween Movie/Game night**
Bellissima, 7 p.m.

**Black Party '08**
www.affairwithflair.com

# upcoming

Visit **www.sovo.com** for expanded calendars and organization listings covering nightlife, sports, spirituality and health.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | **OCT. 31** Ultra Naté and DJ Escape at Fox Theater's Egyptian Ballroom. www.foxtheatre.org | **NOV. 1** Women for Hire "Work from Home" Expo at Cobb Galleria. www.womenforhire.com |
| **NOV. 2** Black Party 08. www.affairwithflair.com | **NOV. 3** Bingo at Joe's on Juniper. www.joesatlanta.com | **NOV. 4** Stonewall Democrats Election Night Party at Halo. www.atlantastonewall.org | **NOV. 5** Rachel Sage at Eddie's Attic. www.eddiesattic.com | **NOV. 6** 'Jiggle: (Re)Shaping American Women' at Charis. charisbooksandmore.com | **NOV. 7** Lily Tomlin at Ferst Center for the Arts. www.ferstcenter.gatech.edu | **NOV. 8** Charis' 34th Birthday. charisbooksandmore.com |
| **NOV. 9** Tina Turner at Phillips Arena. www.phillipsarena.com | **NOV. 10** Usher at Tabernacle. www.tabernacleatl.com | **NOV. 11** Coldplay at Philips Arena. www.philipsarena.com | **NOV. 12** Family Night PALS Bingo. www.palsatlanta.org | **NOV. 13** Cable Positive's Positively Art at Mason Murer Gallery. www.cablepositive.org | **NOV. 14** S. Jaen Black with novel 'Bastante' at Charis Books and More. charisbooksandmore.com | **NOV. 15** Outwrite's 15th Anniversary Party. www.outwritebooks.com |
| **NOV. 16** Lambda Car Club Cruise In. www.lcc-dogwood.org | **NOV. 17** Catie Curtis at Eddie's Attic. www.eddiesattic.com | **NOV. 18** Sarah Brightman at Gwinnett Center Arena. www.gwinnettcenter.com | **NOV. 19** 'A Tuna Christmas' opens at ART Station. www.artstation.org | **NOV. 20** 10th Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance at State Capitol. | **NOV. 21** Acoustic performances, 8 p.m.; DJs, 10 p.m. myspace.com/bellissima_lounge | **NOV. 22** Amy Ray at Variety Playhouse. variety-playhouse.com |
| **NOV. 23** Amy Ray signing at Borders-Buckhead. www.bordersbooks.com | **NOV. 24** Madonna 'Sticky & Sweet' Tour at Philips Arena. www.philipsarena.com | **NOV. 25** Comedy night at Eddie's with Alyssa Barnett. www.eddiesattic.com | **NOV. 26** Movie 'Milk' about Harvey Milk opens | **NOV. 27** 'A Queer Carol' at Theatre Decatur. www.theatredecatur.com | **NOV. 28** 'Santaland Diaries' starts run at Horizon Theatre. www.horizontheatre.com | **NOV. 29** Jason Mraz at the Tabernacle. www.tabernacleatl.com |

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# 2008 PRIDE RIDE

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Saturday,
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Starts and Ends at Piedmont Park
Check-in starts at 7am, Ride starts at 8am
$25 in advance $30 onsite
Fully Supported Ride
All skill levels welcome
Helmets Required for all Riders

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20 mile or 40 mile course options
Both routes tour some of Atlanta's most historic neighborhoods.
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PRESENTED BY: gay.com

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SOUTHERN VOICE COMMUNITY

## FRIDAY, OCT. 31

**The Atlanta Freedom Concert Band** holds its weekly practice and welcomes new members at all rehearsals. 7 – 9 p.m. at 1379 Tullie Road. www.atlantafreedombands.com

## SATURDAY, NOV. 1

**The Work from Home Expo**, hosted by Women for Hire, targets women seeking an alternative to cubicle life. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Cobb Galleria, Two Galleria Parkway. 212-290-2600, www.womenforhire.com

**Fourth Tuesday West**, for lesbians on the city's west side, holds its monthly get-together. 1 p.m. at Fabiano's Deli & Pizzeria, 6698 Broad St., Douglasville. 678-715-3344, www.fourthtuesday.org

## MONDAY, NOV. 3

**Gender Crossing**, a group for personal growth and support of transgender adults, as well as other gender variant or gender nonconforming individuals, has weekly Monday meetings. 7:30 p.m. at St. Mark United Methodist Church, 781 Peachtree St. gendercrossing@gmail.com, 404-406-8327, www.gendercrossing.org

**Faiths & Feminism Interfaith Book Circle** meets the first Monday of the month at Charis Books & More. This month's book to discuss is "Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality" by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow. 7 - 8:30 p.m. Charis Books & More, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, 404-522-9912, www.charisbooksandmore.com

## TUESDAY, NOV. 4

It's finally **Election Day**. Visit www.sos.state.ga.us for help locating your polling place, then check Page 13 for **gay Election Night parties** around the city.

## WEDNESDAY, NOV. 5

**Charis Books & More** continues its Urban Sustainability series with "Biodiesel Basics" from 7 - 8:30 p.m. Robert Del Bueno, founder of Atlanta-based Refuel Biodiesel, will discuss the group's focus on bio-diesel production exclusively from waste cooking oils. Charis, 1189 Euclid Ave. NE, 404-522-9912, www.charisbooksandmore.com

ON THE WEB:
For other calendars of special events, visit www.sovo.com.

TO ADD A LISTING...
*e-mail calendar@sovo.com, call 404-876-1819, ext. 19, or fax to 404-876-2709, attn: Calendar. Entries should be submitted at least 14 days in advance of publication date.*

**Philip Rafshoon**, owner of Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse. (File photo)

# Gay book nooks

## Outwrite celebrates 15 years, Charis hits 34-year mark

By DYANA BAGBY
*dbagby@sovo.com*

**ANDRE CHARLES CASTAING SKIMMED THE** many titles stacked on the shelves at Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse while waiting in line Wednesday night to have his copy of "A Lion Among Men" autographed by author Gregory Maguire, who also wrote the bestseller "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West." More than 150 people packed into the Midtown bookstore to hear the renowned author read and answer questions.

Outwrite, Castaing says, is a "very comfortable place" for people to be who they are — while also doing some serious book shopping.

"I moved here from Baton Rouge where it wasn't as easy being out," says Castaing, 47.

"This store is part of the community. It's not a big-box bookstore. We can come here and look at gay titles and not feel like we have to look both ways," he adds, smiling.

Outwrite celebrates its 15th birthday party on Nov. 15 with a DJ and drinks and plenty more, promises owner Philip Rafshoon.

Castaing's partner, Michael Magursky, 38, says he remembers when he was in the Navy and visiting Atlanta.

"I knew exactly how long it took to get from the airport to the MARTA [in Midtown] and to Outwrite," he says. "I was too afraid to [be out] anywhere else. It was a neat retreat."

"This place had meaning for me even before I moved here. And I'd much rather support a business that has meaning to me," Magursky adds. "Outwrite is ours."

**GREGORY MAGUIRE, WHOSE "WICKED" WENT** on to be the Tony-award winning Broadway musical of the same name, is just one of many noted authors Rafshoon brings to his store on a regular basis.

Just in the past few months, celebrities such as Maureen McCormick (Marcia Brady of "Brady Bunch" fame) and Jackie Collins have stopped by to read and sign from their memoirs. Notable gay authors to read and sign their books — and autograph the infamous wall of fame tucked in the back corner of the store — include Tab Hunter, Lance Bass, Judy Gold, Armistead Maupin, Rita Mae Brown and E. Lynn Harris.

"We're known worldwide for the authors we bring and for really great events," says Rafshoon, who recalls the idea for a bookstore began with a business survey advertised in Southern Voice seeking potential investors.

**Charis Books & More**
**34th anniversary celebration**
Nov. 8, 11 a.m.
1189 Euclid Ave. NE
404-524-0304

**Outwrite Bookstore & Coffeehouse**
**15th anniversary celebration**
Nov. 15, 8-11 p.m.
991 Piedmont Ave.
404-607-0082
www.outwritebooks.com

The store opened in 1993. Creating a bookstore and place for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people to meet and congregate during the daytime was an idea that "felt like a right fit," Rafshoon says.

"I was born in New York, but I've lived here since I was 6 — I just always wanted to have a place where people could walk to and gather. I wanted to provide a community type of store."

**RAFSHOON SAYS HIS DESIRE TO OPEN A** bookstore began with reading "Men on Men" anthologies, which he found at the lesbian-owned feminist independent bookstore Charis Books & More. But he was also deeply inspired by "A Boy's Own Story" by Edmund White.

"We've gone from being a small store in a shopping center to a major presence on a corner," he says. "I love what I do, I love the community, I love the people who work here and I love being able to change people's lives by giving them the right book."

As Midtown has evolved, so has Outwrite, Rafshoon says. The bookstore will always keep gay and lesbian readers at the forefront, but there are also plenty of books available to non-gay book lovers as well.

"Our community is defined a lot of ways," he says. "We go through some pretty hard times and we always need every ounce of support we can get."

One of Rafshoon's fondest Outwrite memories is when Olympic diver Greg Louganis visited with his memoir to share his story of being HIV positive. The event began at 3 p.m. and people lined up, in the rain, beginning at 8 a.m.

It's with authors like these that Rafshoon decided to start the "author wall" in the far back corner of the store. There you can see the autographs from such noted authors as Louganis and Maguire, but also Edmund White, Armistead Maupin, E. Lynn Harris and even Dan Savage and local favorite Hollis Gillespie.

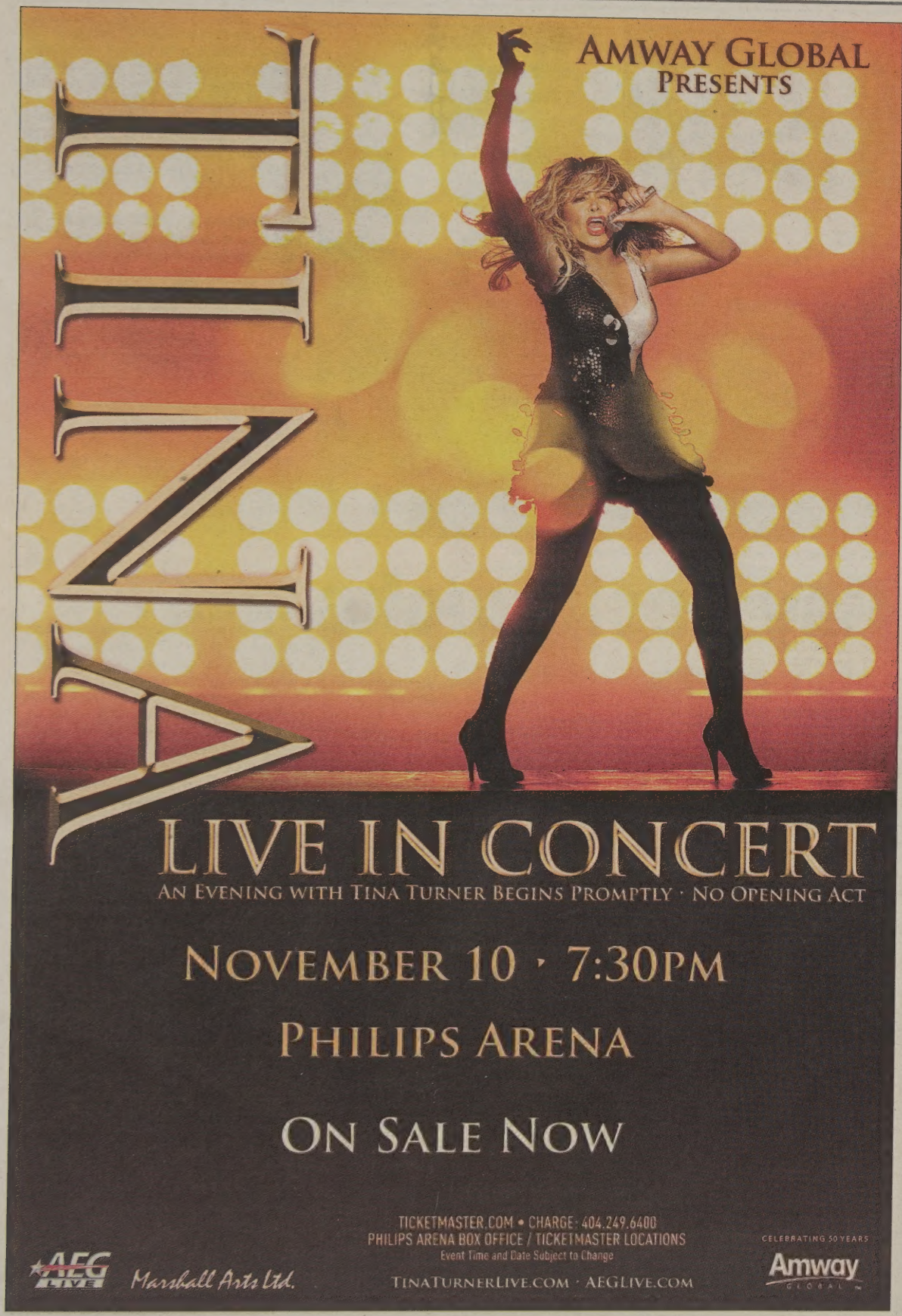
While Outwrite continues to evolve to keep up with trends and to stay on top of the independent book seller business, Rafshoon says the store will never lose its mission of serving gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender book lovers.

"We will always remain strong to our gay and lesbian roots," he says.

**FOR CHARIS BOOKS & MORE,** making it to the 34-year mark puts it in a small group of independent bookstores that has survived in a market where big box sellers dominate.

The store has suffered financially in the past, but ongoing events — from book writing workshops for queer teens to feminist author talks — at its store in Little Five Points continue to make it a viable option for those seeking something more from a bookstore.

A book sale complete with drinks — and, of course, a birthday cake — is planned for Nov. 8 at Charis, which means "peace" in Greek.




## SOVO FLASHBACK

# 31 days, 31 leaders

Today concludes Gay History Month. For each of the last 31 days, Southern Voice used our website to feature a different individual or organization that shaped the history of Atlanta's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

To learn more about these 31 local gay history icons, visit **www.sovo.com.**

1. Olympics Out of Cobb movement
2. Michael Hardwick, sodomy law challenge plaintiff
3. Charis Books & More founders
4. Rev. Erin Swenson, first out transgender pastor to maintain ordination
5. Black Gay Pride organizer Tony Daniels
6. Early female impersonator Billy Jones/Phyllis Killer
7. State Rep. Karla Drenner, first openly gay state lawmaker
8. Berl Boykin, early Pride and Gay Liberation Front activist
9. ZAMI, Atlanta organization for black lesbians
10. Singer-songwriters Indigo Girls
11. Philip Rafshoon, Outwrite Bookstore owner
12. Dennie Doucher, Atlanta Lesbian Health Initiative co-founder
13. Drag queen and performer extraordinaire RuPaul
14. Cathy Woolard, Georgia's first openly gay elected official
15. Kecia Cunningham, Georgia's first African-American openly gay elected official
16. Cracker Barrel protesters
17. Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance
18. Michelle Bruce, Georgia's first openly transgender elected official
19. Gay neighborhood and HIV activist John Howell
20. ACT UP Atlanta
21. Early Pride activist Charlie St. John
22. Early political activist Gil Robinson
23. Venus Landin, community leader and domestic violence victim
24. Brian Bates, first openly gay Republican in elected office
25. African-American entrepreneur Norris Herndon
26. Gay rights allies Joe & Goldy Criscuolo
27. Swiftwaters founder Joyce Tree
28. HIV activist John Kappers
29. Pride leader Hubert Alexander
30. Student Gay-Straight Alliance activist Kerry Pacer
31. Southern Voice founders Chris Cash and Leigh Vanderels

GAY History MONTH spotlight

Each week in October, SoVo Flashback featured an organization working to preserve Atlanta's gay history. You can also learn more about these groups at **www.sovo.com.**

1. Touching Up Our Roots
2. Center for Civil & Human Rights
3. Atlanta History Center
4. Atlanta-Fulton County Library System

**— Laura Douglas-Brown**

SO VO SOUTHERN VOICE COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

# Women's Basketball League tips off

The Decatur Women's Sports League's basketball season is set to begin its second year with signups Nov. 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Decatur Recreation Center.

"This league is for fun and recreation and all fees after operating costs go to the Atlanta Lesbian Health Initiative," says Anne "Sarge" Barr, commissioner of the Decatur Women's Sports League.

Last year, nine teams participated in the basketball league and Barr hopes more players turn out this year. The Decatur Women's Sports League also offers softball, tennis and bowling leagues throughout the year.

Nine teams participated in last year's inaugural basketball season of the Decatur Women's Sports League. (Photo courtesy Decatur Women's Sports League)

Cost to join this year's basketball league is $60 per player. People can join as a team or as an individual who will then be placed with a team, Barr says.

"I just know that our goal is to treat people with respect, include everyone and have a venue that is fun. We are committed to helping the community. That's what is appealing. It is about relationships and making a positive difference. It is not just playing a sport," Barr says.

To date, donations from the sports league to ALHI total approximately $8,000.

— Dyana Bagby

**Decatur Women's Basketball League sign ups**
Nov. 1, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Decatur Recreation Center
231 Sycamore St., Decatur
www.decaturwomen.com

## Putting the 'gay' in gaming

Outlantacon wants you to break out the 20-sided dice in a bid to dominate the world, or at least a world, at their first gaming convention specifically geared toward gay gamers.

Atlanta Outworlders, a group of gay science fiction and gaming enthusiasts, is putting on its first convention, a one-day gaming event, on Nov. 8 at the Knights of Columbus on Buford Highway. Outworlder member Kris Harter says Outlantacon is a response to a demand for gay gaming at Dragon*Con and last year's Gaylaxicon.

"Since people contact us, and ask us, 'Where can we meet with other gay people?' we try to provide that space where gay gaming people can get together," Harter says.

Gaylaxicon is a traveling convention that visits different cities each year. This year the event has moved to Washington, D.C.

Organizers will stage a round of "The Match Game," a remake of the 1970s game show of the same name that proved very popular at Gaylaxicon, Harter said. Outlantacon will also feature game demonstrations, at least seven different tournaments and additional programming.

— Matt Schafer

**Outlantacon**
Nov. 8, 10 a.m. - Midnight
2620 Buford Highway
Atlanta, GA 30324
404-636-9237
www.outlantacon.org

## Katrina survivors' story benefits women's center

It's been 11 years since Eve Ensler transitioned from simply the playwright responsible for the "Vagina Monologues" phenomenon into the face behind "V-Day" for women. Beginning Nov. 6 in Atlanta, she combines her big-named connections through her long-running play, her passion for women's causes and her playwriting skills in "Swimming Upstream" at 14th Street Playhouse.

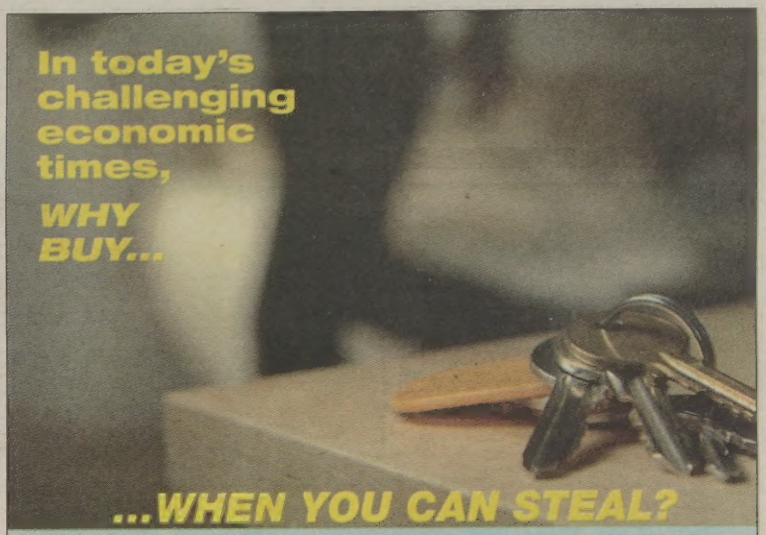
"Swimming Upstream" may be November's hottest theater ticket. In it, Ensler weaves together the stories of female Hurricane Katrina survivors that in Atlanta stars the likes of Phylicia Rashad, Jasmin Guy, Shirley Knight and Kerry Washington. Add to that the national reputation of director Kenny Leon and his True Colors Theatre Company, as well as an opening weekend gala to benefit the Atlanta Feminist Women's Center, and gay audiences are in for a real treat.

The opening gala with a New Orleans theme costs $250 and includes a ticket to the play. After the show, the Nov. 6 audience crosses 14th Street from the theater to the W Hotel for the party in a New Orleans band-line parade that includes Ensler, Leon and the full cast.

— Mike Fleming

**'Swimming Upstream'**
Nov. 5-16
14th Street Playhouse
173 14th St.
www.14thstplayhouse.org

**Opening gala to benefit Feminist Women's Health Center**
Nov. 6, following 8 p.m. performance
W Hotel Midtown, 188 14th St.
Tickets: 404-588-0308, ext. 203
$250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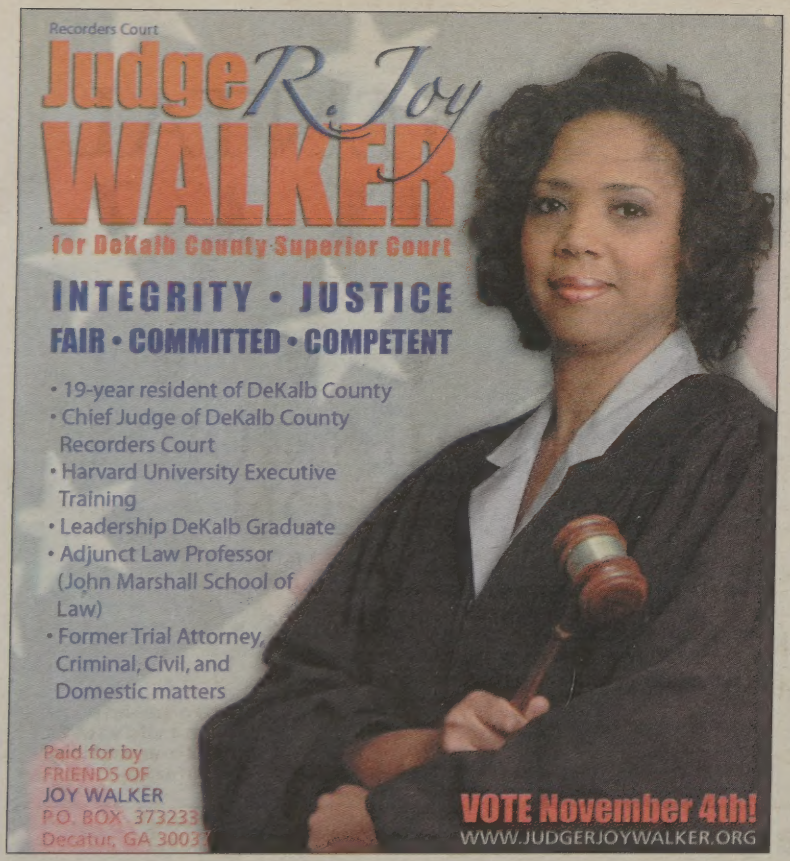
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SOUTHERN VOICE
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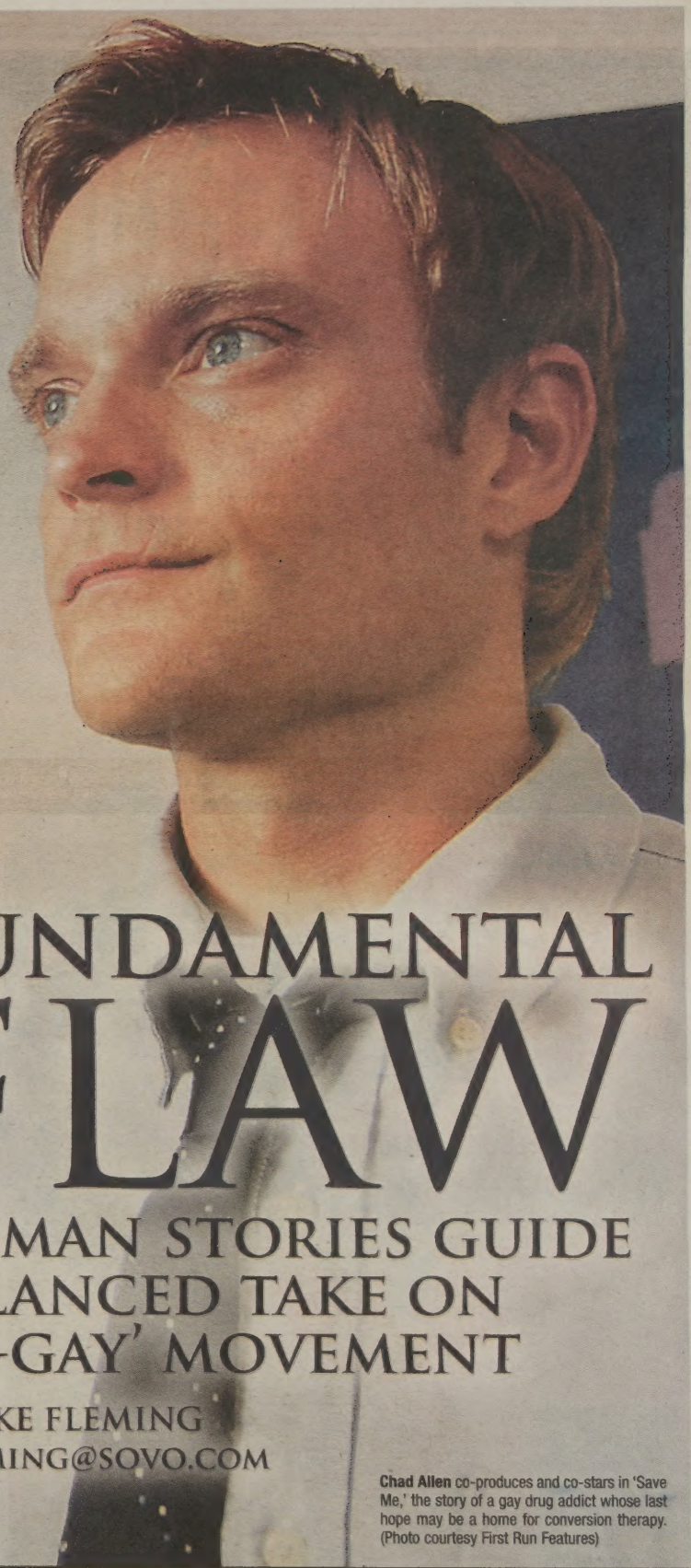
# FUNDAMENTAL FLAW

## HUMAN STORIES GUIDE BALANCED TAKE ON 'EX-GAY' MOVEMENT

BY MIKE FLEMING
MFLEMING@SOVO.COM



**Chad Allen** co-produces and co-stars in 'Save Me,' the story of a gay drug addict whose last hope may be a home for conversion therapy. (Photo courtesy First Run Features)

**'Save Me'**
Opens Oct. 31
Landmark Midtown Art Cinema
931 Monroe Drive
678-495-1424
www.landmarktheatres.com
*Interfaith discussion follows opening night screening*

**AS GAY-THEMED MOVIES** branch increasingly into the multiple experiences that show there is no singular "gay lifestyle," a new film production company led by actors Chad Allen and Robert Gant releases its first project, "Save Me," a fictional narrative about men participating in the "ex-gay" movement.

The film opens in Atlanta on Oct. 31. That night, Chuck Bowen of the Atlanta Interfaith Network and Rev. Margaret Aymer of the Interdenominational Theological Center lead a discussion after the 7:05 p.m. screening.

"Save Me" follows Mark (Allen), a gay drug addict who suffers an accidental overdose after a cocaine-and-sex binge. Fed up with Mark's self-destructive life and convinced his problems stem from his sexual orientation, his family checks him into a religious retreat for reparative therapy to cure him of his "gay affliction."

Gayle (Judith Light), a Christian fundamentalist, runs the retreat with her husband and leads 12-step meetings with the residents. Mark soon takes to heart the group's spiritual message and manages to beat his drug addiction, but he also forms a strong bond with another resident, Scott (Gant). As the men's friendship turns to romance and they struggle to reconcile it with the group's teachings, Gayle notices, and the film's central conflict ensues.

Director Robert Cary was drawn to the storyline, as well as a chance to address the "ex-gay" controversy with fairness and balance.

"I was attracted to presenting both sides compassionately and avoiding the easy mark of vilifying the Christian characters and their point of view," Cary tells Southern Voice. "It was important to me to show a ministry not doing anything too extreme or shocking, because the audience would immediately make up its mind and then be stuck there for an hour and a half."

**WHAT WORKS IN "SAVE ME" IS CARY'S** use of subtlety. Some of the beautiful simplicity was necessitated by a low budget and an 18-day shooting schedule, but unembellished set-ups — like two characters talking in a van — as well as restrained performances let us focus on the character interactions.

"The issues in the film are about identity, and questioning those is always inherently intense," Cary says. "But what we strove for was to keep the story human — about relationships rather than about polemic issues. Audiences connect to relationships much more than ideologies."

Cary admits to holding a personal opinion on the overall issue.

"We live in a world in which religion is treated like a birthright and sexuality is something that is learned or chosen, when in fact it's just the opposite," he says. "But in the film, we rely on the storytelling of these characters coming together, and trust that what is simple is even more teaching than big virtuosos."

**THE PERFORMANCE BY VETERAN ACTOR** Light, who also co-produces with Allen and Gant, carries the film. Light simultaneously shows Gayle as staunchly conservative and willfully strong, yet sympathetic and full of heart. In addition to pitch-perfect delivery, Light's real strength shines in silent moments — a glance, a stern expression, a tearful eye.

Allen and Gant offer some strong moments of their own. Gant evokes our empathy when his character visits a dying father. Allen shines when scenes call for extreme emotion, including the drug romp and as one of the housemates almost dies.

But just as fundamentalism has its flaws, so too does "Save Me." The chemistry between the two lead actors is nil when it comes to the love story. It's not completely their fault. The script doesn't give them much time to fall in love, nor the audience much time to buy it.

As co-producers and lead actors, Allen, Gant and Light do most of the heavy lifting in front of the camera, but they are supported by some remarkable performances by the ensemble of men at the reparative retreat. One in particular — Robert Baker as Lester — embodies the underlying doubt many audience members already have about the potential harm in reparative therapy, as well as a hope that spiritual satisfaction can co-exist with love between men.

**Dar Williams, Page 29 • 'Veranda,' Page 31 • Traxx Girls' Saturdays, Page 33**

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# 'Promised' keeper

## Dar Williams heads to Atlanta with a song for your wedding

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On "Promised Land," longtime gay ally Dar Williams cultivates a set of songs that ranks with her finest and most unforgettable work. Tunes such as "It's Alright," "The Easy Way" and "You Are Everyone," along with earthy songs like "The Tide Falls Away" and "Holly Tree," plus a few knockouts including "Go To The Woods" and "The Buzzer" find Williams at the top of her craft.

As a bonus, her covers of "Midnight Radio" (from "Hedwig and the Angry Inch") and Fountains of Wayne's "Troubled Times" indicate that Williams hasn't lost her knack for selecting marvelous material to interpret.

We spoke with Williams shortly before the release of "Promised Land" last month as she prepared to hit the road, including an Atlanta stop on Nov. 1 at Eddie's Attic in Decatur.

**SoVo: With the "Promised Land" cover photo and the message of the environmental song "Go To The Woods," is this disc your "An Inconvenient Truth"?**

**Williams:** I think "Promised Land" is kind of a challenge, at this point. There's nothing that we can't do right now, and we're really poised. Actually, I talked to my congressman, John Hall, formerly of the band Orleans. He's a friend, and he said that "this country is poised with its good will."

And I think we're poised with technology and poised with a local food movement where people are going to their farmers markets. I think that the world is capable of being the promised land. As long as we don't feel like it's a given, as opposed to something that we earn.

Where I live right now [New York City], we have a beautiful garden, we have great neighbors, we have a fabulous farmer's market, there's artwork from artists all around me whose art is going to be in the CD booklet, which is kind of an old-fashioned idea, having a CD booklet. ...

Basically, the promised land is ours if we are willing to share it. It's not ours if we're going to fight over it.

**SoVo: The album also includes cover songs, and we know you like Shawn Colvin, who did a cover album. Are there any chances of an entire album of cover tunes by you?**

**Williams:** Never, never, never. I really don't want to do that. She's a real master. She says that music saved her life — I don't want to call her a freak, but if I call her a freak, it would be in the most positive sense.

I toured with her and the way she leaned over her guitar and listened to the chords as she would play along with people, I could see her as a teenager picking out these songs. She just has that.

I don't think I would do a covers album, but I'm really happy to find songs to cover on albums.

**Dar Williams** brings her new album to Atlanta with hope for a 'Promised Land' within reach. (Photo by C. Taylor Crothers)

**Dar Williams**
Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
515-B North McDonough St., Decatur
404-377-4976
www.darwilliams.com
www.eddiesattic.com

**SoVo: As someone with a sizeable gay and lesbian following, if someone wanted to use a Dar Williams song for their same-sex wedding, how would you feel and what would you recommend?**

**Williams:** There are two things that make me feel like I could die tomorrow. One is when I hear about a teenager who's locked herself up in her room with only my music, which happened once. Every time I'm having a career low, I think about that girl.

And the other is hearing that somebody wants to use one of my songs at their wedding. I wrote a song called "You Rise and Meet The Day" ... [It's] a song about people who put in the work for the world and to the world and still rise in the morning and meet the day and show that kind of commitment to the people they love.

I would especially recommend that song for anybody in the LGBT community, because it's an affirmation of a really important social movement, right now, to be married. It's a statement. It's joyful, but it's also important and courageous.


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# Venerable 'Veranda'

## Gay theater duo brings back local favorite

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**BEFORE GAY PLAYWRITING COUPLE JOHN GIBSON** and Anthony Morris made Atlanta history with their long-running socialite satire "Peachtree Battle," they tackled another comedy featuring a dysfunctional Southern family — the "Veranda" trilogy. The second in the series is now playing at Ansley Park Playhouse for an extended run through February.

The central character in "Veranda 2" is Sarah Edward (Tina McKissick), a Buckhead socialite/matriarch obsessed with being named this year's Christian of the Year. She is planning a wedding for her son, but not just any wedding. Her son is marrying his male partner.

What Sarah has not counted on are numerous obstacles: a visit from her nasty mother-in-law; a homeless man her daughter brings home; spats with her husband over bills he has found everywhere; and a friend who is adopting a child.

The original "Veranda" was staged back in 1995, and it and its sequels have seen productions here and in other cities since. It's been a while since any of them were staged, and Morris and Gibson have made slight changes to "Veranda 2."

"We follow the news," Gibson says. "If it resonates, we put it in. We have put in Joe the Plumber, but he won't be in after the election."

The couple wrote "Veranda 2" long before the debate over gay marriage began.

"When we wrote this, people weren't even thinking of gay marriage," he says. "This was before 'Roseanne' and 'Ellen.'"

Parallels can be drawn between the "Veranda" series and "Peachtree Battle."

"Both are fast paced and are shows people can relate to," Gibson says. "'Peachtree Battle' might be a little darker. When people see 'Veranda,' they say it's their family. When they see 'Peachtree Battle,' they say they know a family like that."

**THE ROLE OF CHARITY DIVINE IS PLAYED BY** Jim Marks, whose drag alter ego Bubba D. Licious has been an Atlanta mainstay. Charity, a minister's wife, has recently adopted a young girl and is feeling maternal, even experiencing maternity pains.

Gibson and Marks have known each other a long time.

"Jim mentioned to me that he wanted to branch out and do some theater," Gibson says. "We thought this would be a good opportunity. He seems very comfortable onstage and fits in well with this cast. He has been entertaining folks for years and has great comedic timing."

Marks appeared in last year's "Greater Tuna" at Theatre Decatur, which was his first acting gig, and proves to be extremely funny here.

"Veranda" also marks the return to performing for gay actor Gary Fortson, who is alternating the role of Charity Divine with Marks for a short time in November. A few years back, Fortson lost his sight, and this is his first time on stage since. He plays the sighted character by memorizing the set.

**MORRIS AND GIBSON HAVE BEEN A COUPLE FOR** 14 years. They launched Peachtree Playhouse back in 1999, and then later opened Ansley Park Playhouse. They have alternated plays at both locations.

Upcoming in March will be their first new project in a while, "A Sunday Afternoon at Loehmann's." In it, eight women in a dressing room examine their relationships with men and each other. The tone is somewhat different from their other shows, according to Gibson.

Gibson and Morris' "Peachtree Battle" proved to be a phenomenal success. The comedy opened in 2001 and closed in September of this year, making it the longest running play in Atlanta history. According to the couple, it was seen by 140,000 patrons.

They are in the process of making a film version of the comedy. Currently, they are working with a studio on the script and are hoping that once revisions are complete, a director and actors can come aboard. They hope to shoot the film in Atlanta.

When time permits, they also hope to stage "Veranda 4" at some point next year.

The cast of 'Veranda 2' includes drag favorite **Jim 'Bubba D. Licious' Marks** (center). The play is just one by local playwriting dynamic duo **John Gibson** (inset left) and **Anthony Morris**. (Cast photo courtesy Ansley Park Playhouse, Gibson/Morris File photo)

**'Veranda 2'**
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# On the right Traxx

## Lesbian party promoters strive for diversity

By DYANA BAGBY
*dbagby@sovo.com*

Large crowds of women pack parties sponsored by Traxx Girls, a group that is dedicated to serving the 'professional, mature and fabulous.' (Photo courtesy Traxx Girls)

**TRAXX GIRLS IN ATLANTA KNOWS HOW TO HEAT** up lesbian nightlife, offering numerous events throughout the year as well as regular parties that cater to the "professional, mature and fabulous."

"We don't want to just throw a party, we want people to have an experience," says Avian Watson, spokesperson for Traxx Girls. "Traxx Girls is a very fun, innovative group."

Since April 2006, Traxx Girls has earned a reputation for throwing some of the hottest parties for women who love women. Beginning Nov. 1, the group launches its new L.I.F.E. Saturdays to be held the first and third Saturday of each month.

The Nov. 1 party features a performance by local R&B singer Monifah. Future L.I.F.E. Saturdays parties will include London "Deelishis" Charles from the VH1 hit reality TV series "Flavor of Love" as well as Miami-based hip-hop artist Trina.

**THE NEW SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY IS SIMPLY** a way to tap into a crowd seeking more than what is currently offered at clubs and bars, Watson says.

"The venue is a loft, a really sexy environment. It's an industry night for a more upscale, alternative crowd; for people who want to hear rock music and not just hip hop, but who want to hear everything," she says.

The venue for L.I.F.E. Saturdays at 595 North Ave. also includes a restaurant and full bar, so women can dine before they enter into the loft area to dance the night away. And while Traxx Girls seeks to please women, their parties are always open to men and all-inclusive, Watson says.

"We don't want to leave out anyone," she says. "We don't want race to stop you from coming. At past events, we've had such diversity, with black women, Spanish, Asian. We're also happy to see transgender people coming to our events. Our parties are always filled with gorgeous women."

**L.I.F.E. SATURDAYS COMES ON THE HEELS OF** of Traxx Girls' Halloween "Dreams & Nightmares" party tonight at Club Traxx in Decatur, including a fashion show.

The new Saturday night event also follows the successful Thursday night partnership Traxx Girls has with My Sisters' Room in East Atlanta Village, in which the party promoters bring in players from the women's football team the Atlanta Xplosion for a night of drink specials and dancing.

"We have a lot going on this fall and this night usually brings in a nice eclectic crowd. We're really liking it," Watson says.

Other regular nights include My Girl Gotta Girlfriend Sundays at Club Miami, hosted by Miss Sophia from V-103's Frank & Wanda Morning Show, and Frisky Fridays, also at Club Miami.

Traxx Girls is also looking to expand its party promotions outside of Atlanta — and Georgia. A weekend event planned for Nov. 28-Nov. 30 in New Orleans features celebrities including Deelishis and Myami from "Flavor Of Love," with performances by Whiplash and Big Yo.

"Traxx Girls is not afraid to push the envelope, to try new things, to be really innovative," Watson says.

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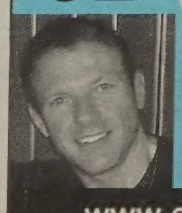

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# Character driven

## Kevin of 'Brothers & Sisters' passes the test

SOUTHERN VOICE TV

SCOTT SODE

Matthew Rhys (left) plays Kevin Walker on ABC's 'Brothers & Sisters.' Gay actor Luke MacFarlane plays his partner on the show. (Photo by Mitch Haddad; courtesy of ABC)

**MANY GAY CRITICS ARE RELENTLESS WHEN IT** comes to gay television characters. They must be prominent, not peripheral. They can't be stereotypical, but they can't be one-note and boring either.

They must avoid a clichéd coming out, and they must not be overly angsty about their sexuality. Their lives should involve complications unrelated to being gay, but we must on a continual basis be reminded that they are, in fact, gay, or they'll be deemed "gay in name only."

They can't be promiscuous; they can't be campy; they can't be psychotic. They should preferably be in a relationship, and if they are, they should have awesome, hot make-out scenes frequently. Anything less is hardly equal treatment.

But with a glass-half-full mentality, we should appreciate the strides made in the last few years. Watching "Brothers & Sisters," it's delightful how the character Kevin Walker passes every gay test.

Created by out playwright Jon Robin Baitz, overseen by out producer Greg Berlanti and portrayed by straight actor Matthew Rhys, Kevin Walker is everything gay audiences could ask for, and then some. He's a prominent character whose conflict often derives from his crazy family, not his sexual orientation. But his sexuality isn't a non-entity; he often fights for his rights when embroiled in political discussions, and incidentally, gets very excited about seeing "Wicked."

He's in a committed relationship with his partner Scotty (gay actor Luke MacFarlane) that's featured no more and no less than any of the other couples on the show.

**ANYONE DOUBTING KEVIN'S VIABILITY AS A** gay character need look no further than Kevin's proposal to Scotty at the end of last season.

"I look at Saul [his closeted uncle], who's missed his life entirely, and I realize how lucky I am because I get to come home to someone who is kind and caring and who changes the light bulbs ... Marry me ... I am completely in love with you. I even love the things about you that I hate ... and to me that feels like family. And that's what I want us to be. I want us to be family because that never ends."

The monologue couldn't have been written any better for a straight character. And Rhys' genuine, emotive delivery — as well as MacFarlane's utterly shocked, thrilled reaction — make the scene all the more moving and realistic.

**"BROTHERS & SISTERS," NOW IN ITS THIRD** season, continues to deliver. In a recent episode, Kevin, a lawyer, planned to bring Scotty to a dinner aimed at wooing a sports company to his firm. When his boss questioned that move, noting that the client might become distracted by his sexual orientation, Kevin was put in a modern-day quandary.

Kevin's professional ambitions clashed with his personal life again last Sunday when an overdue reconciling with Scotty's parents coincided with an office function in which Kevin might be named a partner in the law firm.

The situations are emblematic of the real-life tensions and dilemmas gay men and lesbians face. They are realistic interpretations of one of the least-outwardly discriminatory, but ubiquitous forms of sacrifice that even the most accepting workplaces may force on gay professionals.

Kevin is not ashamed of his sexual orientation, but his sexuality is not the only guiding factor in his life. That's good for all of us, and all of America, to see.

**'Brothers & Sisters'**
Sundays at 10 p.m., ABC

# The Nutty Offender

## Jerry Lewis slams the gays, again

Jerry Lewis (Photo by AP)

**JERRY LEWIS** once again rankled Dish's delicate nature in what is becoming a long string of insults against gay people. While on a press tour in Australia, a reporter asked Lewis his opinion on the sport of cricket. Lewis' response: "Oh, cricket? It's a fag game. What are you, nuts?"

Dish questions the wisdom of denouncing Australia's national sport while standing in Australia, but we can't say we're terribly shocked by Lewis hurling anti-gay slurs again. This is far from Lewis' first gay-related gaffe: During his 2007 Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, he pointed to a cameraman and called him an "illiterate fag," although then he quickly apologized for his "poor choice of words."

dish
There's a Fine Line Between Telling the Truth and Talking Trash

And there are hordes of other people he delights in offending as well. During his 2008 telethon, he told his lovely (and significantly younger) co-host **JANN CARL**, "If this were 30 years ago, I'd have been all over you."

On the air, he says these things. Guess there's something to be said for the old adage that eventually you get old enough to say anything you want.

## Madonna sticks it to Guy

Madonna (Photo by AP)

Alas, the divorce drama continues with **MADONNA** and husband **GUY RITCHIE**. According to the Times in London, Ritchie turned down a fat divorce settlement of 20 million pounds — about $40 million in U.S. dollars — which is presumably more money than he will make in the rest of his own career. He reportedly rejected the offer because he disagrees on custody terms of their children Rocco and David (Madonna also has a daughter, Lourdes, from a previous relationship with **CARLOS LEON**).

Speaking of the shaft: Dish recently stumbled upon a certain photo of Madonna and Guy exiting a London sex shop. Madonna is carrying a new "Purple Penetrator," a pair of ladies' panties with an attachable … well, Dish would rather not say, lest we blush.

Presuming the purchase was for themselves, Madonna is devilishly smiling in the photo, while Guy's facial expression is more apprehensive. Perhaps he was nervous about the photogs, or perhaps he was just anticipating the big night to come.

It's a shame, with all that bedroom excitement, they still couldn't make things work.

## Jennifer Hudson update

We take a serious turn with an update on the story of **JENNIFER HUDSON**'s family. As has been widely reported, Hudson's mother, Darnell Donerson, and brother Jason Hudson, were both shot to death last Friday in Donerson's West Side Chicago home. Jennifer's 7-year-old nephew, Julian King, was abducted from the home, and had been reported missing; but in the latest twist of the sad tale, King's body was then found in the back of a stolen SUV, with gunshot wounds to the head.

Jennifer Hudson (Photo by AP)

Police have not yet made any arrests, but one person has been identified as "of interest": William Balfour, the estranged husband of Jennifer Hudson's sister. Balfour jumped to the front of the suspect line when police discovered he missed a parole meeting on Friday, the same day as the shootings.

Apparently, the meeting was an anger management class, which he was required to take after a prison term for assault and carjacking.

When police called Balfour to inquire why he missed his meeting, he told them he was "babysitting on the West Side." It's too distressing for even Dish to think about.

The FBI is working the case, so it's obviously just a matter of time until Balfour is charged. Dish sends our warmest condolences to the Hudson family.

Send comments, suggestions to **Dish@sovo.com**

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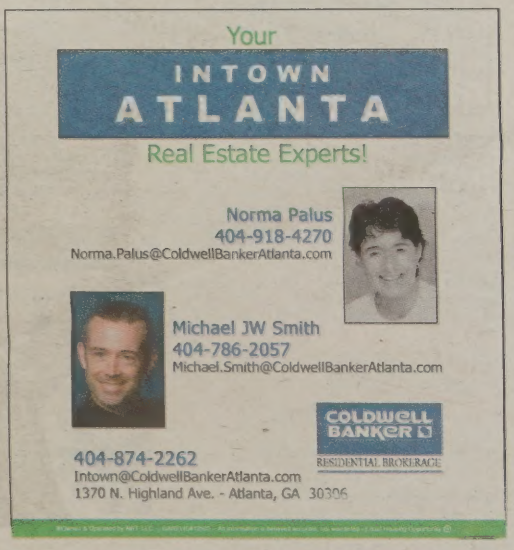

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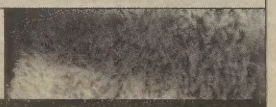
**SATURDAY NOV. 1ST**

**10AM - TREASURE HUNT - OUTLET FREE FURNITURE**
Find five items valued at $500 for **FREE** (one item per family)
**FREE** coffee & doughnuts while you wait for the treasure hunt to begin.

**NORCROSS SHOWROOM - SAT ONLY FREE SCOOTER**
Register for a drawing to win a **FREE** Tiger scooter at By Design Norcross Showroom.

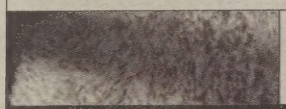
**NORCROSS SHOWROOM - SAT-SUN FREE RUG**
Receive a **FREE** 4x6 shag rug with any purchase over $2500



**SUNDAY NOV. 2ND**

**12 - 2PM - MIDTOWN SHOWROOM FREE HOT DOGS**
Enjoy **FREE** hot dogs and sodas from The Varsity while you shop at By Design Midtown.

**MIDTOWN SHOWROOM - SUN ONLY FREE SCOOTER**
Register for a drawing to win a **FREE** Tiger scooter at By Design Midtown Showroom.



**MIDTOWN SHOWROOM - SAT-SUN FREE RUG**
Receive a **FREE** 4x6 shag rug with any purchase over $ 2500

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OUTLET: 6353 Warren Drive Norcross GA 30093 770-840-7056

**Warehouse Sale takes place at By Design Outlet, located behind Norcross Showroom**

*With approved credit and minimum monthly payment. Minimum purchase $1000. Not applicable to previous purchases.